

ILLUSTRATED TALES TO BEWITCH & BEDEVIL YOU

588856

VAMPI
#18

AUG. 1972

VAMPIRELLA

A WARREN MAGAZINE PDC 75¢

The Cold Touch of
The Conjuress
awaits Vampirella --
when she discovers
"DRACULA STILL LIVES"



VAMPI'S FEARY TALES

MY! WHAT AN ASSORTMENT OF HANDSOME MALE READERS. SO STRONG WILLED AND POWERFULL LOOKING. SURELY NO LITTLE OL' FEMALE COULDTWIST YOU AROUND HER LITTLE FINGER, RIGHT? BEFORE YOU REPLY, ABSORB A BRIEF DISSERTATION ON...

NYPHS

A **NYPH** IS ANY TYPE OF MAGICAL MAIDEN WITH THE ABILITY TO ATTRACT OR LURE MEN. THIS CLASSIFICATION MAY ALSO INCLUDE WITCHES, WHO BY POTIONS AND SPELLS MAY ENTRANCE OR MASK THEIR TRUE FACE.

THE EARLIEST NYMPHS WERE THE **Oreads**... GODNESSES OF LOFTY MOUNTAINS ... AND **Dryads**, WHO LIVED IN DEEP FORESTS AND WERE SPIRITUALLY BOUND WITH TREES. UNWARY TRAVELLERS WERE OFTEN PREY TO EITHER THEIR PRANKS ... OR AFFECTIONS.



SUPPOSEDLY PREVALENT DURING THE MIDDLE AGES WAS THE **SUCCUBUS**, A FEMALE DEMON WHO GAINED IMMORTALITY BY MAKING LOVE TO HUMAN MALES IN THE DEAD OF NIGHT.

VARIOUS LITERATURE AND LEGENDS GIVE US FEMALE VAMPIRES, GHOULS, MUMIES, ETC. THESE ARE LESS GENTLER, WITH MEN THEN NYMPHS. SO USE DISCRETION IN DATING STRANGE GIRLS. SOME MAY **REALLY** BE STRANGE!





NO. 18
AUGUST
1972

VAMPIRELLA

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Donald F. McGregor, Douglas Moench, Kevin Pagan

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DRACULA STILL LIVES!

The continuing adventures of Vampirella as Conrad Van Helsing wills the alien girl through time and space to confront Dracula and the Conjurress.

KALI

The tale of the Goddess Kali beset by the powers of the mad magician Caligor. He wished the maiden girl as a sacrifice to the great god Agni.

SONG OF A SAD-EYED SORCERESS

One woman can be all things to a man, as David Winters learns to his everlasting regret. Come walk the spiral road of the soul and the serpent.

WON'T GET FOOLED AGAIN!

Like a thing unknown, the Cates' mansion sat proudly on the crest of death, its gabled roof sagging with the weight of a century-old murdered ghost.

VAMPI'S FLAMES

Profile of writer Kevin Pagan, author of "Nymphs" on p.2, plus a treasure trove of fan page terror stories, including one titled "Eye of the Skull."

THE DORIAN GRAY SYNDROME

Poor Hemut! He lived only for his art, that mysterious almost living painting people spoke of only in their darkest whispers, death's portrait.



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As to that letter from L.F. in *VAMPIRELLA* #16, (Reader L.F. who gave only his initials wrote, "Congratulations on converting *VAMPIRELLA* from a horror comic to one filled with love stories and fairy tales."—ed.) I fail to see his point. What's his gripe anyway? I will defend *VAMPIRELLA* until a stake is driven through my heart.

RICK SALLINGER
Liberty Bora, Pa.

L.F. doesn't know what he's talking about! Creepy and Eerie may be okay but *VAMPIRELLA* is tops by a long shot.

BRUCE BARR
Lawrence, Kansas

The *VAMPIRELLA* series is getting as bad as "General Hospital." I don't really mind the fact that the stories are far beyond the realm of normal imagination. I more or less expect that from *VAMPIRELLA*. But for someone who presupposes to tell the true story of *VAMPIRELLA*, you sure are doing a rotten job. You won't print this.

T. GAGLIANO
Warminster, Pa.

Sure wish you'd cut down on the love story atmosphere in *VAMPIRELLA*. We want more horror and gore! Best story in *VAMPIRELLA* #16 was "And Be a Bride of Chaos." The *VAMPIRELLA* series is really great!

MARK THOMSON
Salt Lake City, Utah

I've been following your exploits for some time, *VAMPI*. You've fared well thus far but it's really too bad you lost your wings back in *VAMPIRELLA* #8. It must be difficult for a being, once so at home in the air, to be confined to earth.

SCOTT STANSBURY
Palo Alto, Calif.

"Gorilla My Dreams" in *VAMPIRELLA* #16 was one of your best yet! When Eva turned into a gorilla, I just about had heart failure! I've just started reading *VAMPIRELLA* and I think it's really great! More stories like "Gorilla My Dreams," *VAMPI*.

PAT FINN
Coffeen, Ill.

"I'll burn my coffin and stand in the sunlight!"

Oh wow! I've been holding off writing to say that "Wolf Hunt" in *VAMPIRELLA* #14 was one of the best stories I've ever seen. Now I'm glad I waited. I refer, of course, to "And Be a Bride of Chaos" in *VAMPIRELLA* #16. This was, in my opinion, the best of the *VAMPIRELLA* saga and about the greatest story yet! The only thing that burned me in Bram Stoker's novel "Dracula" was that Stoker killed off the master. Thanks to you, he is no longer dead! If "Wolf Hunt" & "And Be a Bride of Chaos" don't make the *VAMPIRELLA* 1973 SPECIAL ISSUE, I'll burn my coffin and stand in the sunlight!



RANDY HOLLI
Martin, Tenn.

Better get ready to burn your coffin, Randy. Both stories are much too recent to see publication this year.

VAMPIRELLA is fantastic! I imagine you get a lot of letters which say that but I've heard that women never tire of flattery. At any rate, *VAMPIRELLA* #16 was excellent! I was pleased to see that the cover pictured a full page painting instead of the bordered ones on *VAMPIRELLA* #'s 14 & 15. The cover of *VAMPIRELLA* #16 was good, though not quite up to the level of the now classic *VAMPIRELLA* #12. It was great to see Maroto's work again in "Gorilla My Dreams." Pat Boyette is one of my very favorite artists and I really enjoyed his story, "Lover." Of course, not enough can be said of the *VAMPIRELLA* series. Jose Gonzalez outdoes himself with each new issue. *VAMPIRELLA* is destined to be the best horror fantasy book ever!

M. GREGORY BRYAN
Seminole, Fla.

The stories "Lover" and "Girl on the Red Asteroid" in *VAMPIRELLA* #16 were superb!

ERIK MIAZGA
Toronto, Canada

VAMPIRELLA #16 was a big disappointment. The only good story was "And Be a Bride of Chaos." And the only reason that was any good was because of Gonzalez' artwork. When on earth is your lovely visage going to grace a poster? It has to be by Gonzalez though! I will continue to read *VAMPI* till Chaos needs false teeth.

KYZER STEWART
Lakeland, Fla.

inside 18

Uncle Creepy may have been the first with his own "Creepy Comments" feature (since retitled), but *VAMPIRELLA*'s special, and at first, she didn't want anything that reeked of Creepy's handiwork. Now that she's come around, this INSIDE # section promises to be a regular letters page feature of *VAMPIRELLA*, wherein we'll fill you in on *VAMPI* news of note and provide some background to the stories you're reading. News of note this go-around includes word of a fantastic 17" by 11" puzzle of the cover of *VAMPIRELLA* #2. Painted by Bill Hughes, the cover pictures *VAMPI*'s cousin, Evilly the witch. See p.56 for details. This issue of *VAMPIRELLA* is host to the second "Tomb of the Gods" story, "Kali" on p.26, the creation of "Dax, the Warrior" artist Esteban Maroto. His "Tomb of the Gods" series will appear in future issues of *VAMPIRELLA* while the adventures of Dax currently run in *Eerie*.

The Transylvanian Count, Dracula, returns to plague *VAMPIRELLA* this issue after one issue's hiatus. According to *VAMPIRELLA* writer, T. Casey Brennan, 1972 Warren Award winner for Best Story ("On The Wings of a Bird—Creepy #36), our Drakulonian sweetheart hasn't heard the last of Dracula either.

Profiled this issue, p.66, is veteran writer Kevin Pagan, author of the *VAMPI*'s Feary Tales piece "Nymphs" on the inside front cover. Pagan's work also appears in the current *Creepy*, #46, with the chiller, "On The Ninth Day of Satan" about the coming of the Warlocks.

In case you've noticed some changes in *VAMPIRELLA*, Creepy and Eerie lately (like the start of this INSIDE # feature, for one), those responsible include J.R. Cochran, author of "The Disenfranchised" (*Eerie* #39), who was recently promoted to Editorial Director. Effective with *Eerie* #40, our new Art Director is Bill Dubay (call him "Dube"), who was profiled in *VAMPIRELLA* #15. Dube last illustrated "Girl on the Red Asteroid" in *VAMPIRELLA* #16 and next has a solo opus coming up in *Creepy* #47 titled, "Fur-turization Computation."

Surprise! Flo's Back and Warren's got her! Flo Steinberg, formerly of Marvel Comics, joins our Captain Company division as Marketing Director. Although she'll be spending 100% of her time on this, Mr. Warren also expects her to put an additional 25% on editorial work, where she'll be able to give us the benefit of her experience with that other publisher.



17" x 11" cover puzzle

THE STORY BEHIND THE STORY

Girl On the Red Asteroid

Don Glut, author of "Girl on the Red Asteroid" in *VAMPIRELLA* #16, gives his reasons for writing the piece: My memory on the writing of "Girl on the Red Asteroid" is rather vague. I recall being requested to write a science fiction story for a paperback anthology about three years ago. After trying to come up with something original, I

thought of a beautiful girl hatching from an egg on an alien world. After that, the story was a cinch to write. Unfortunately, neither the story nor anthology ever saw print due to a problem with the publishing company. So, a few years later, I made some changes in the story and adapted it to the format of *VAMPIRELLA*. Thus, it's finally printed.

"Jose Gonzalez is a Michaelangelo when it comes to drawing Vampirella!"

You've really made it big, VAMPI. Keep that great combination of stories, artwork and covers going and you'll put the "bite" on everybody! Let's have more of you by Jose Gonzalez. He's a Michaelangelo when it comes to drawing you!

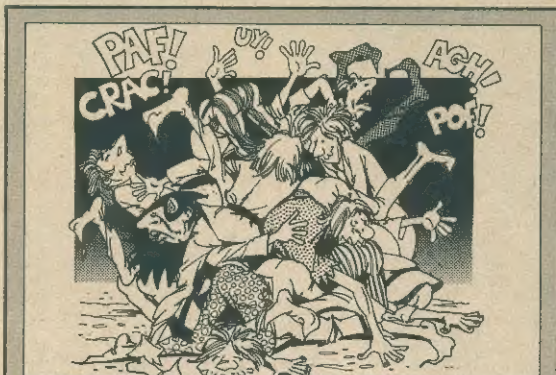
BRUCE HOLROYD
Harrisburg, Pa.

This little epistle concerns two letters that saw print in VAMPIRELLA #17. One was from Mike Adkisson who said there was too much blood and gore in VAMPIRELLA. Hey man, this is a horror comic! If you dig peace and love, you should be reading love comics. The other letter, signed only "Paty," read like a witches brew. I think "Paty," whoever she is, has been watching TV's "Bewitched" too long. I may be a male chauvinist but at least I'm giving my full name.

STEPHEN WISHER
Metamora, Ill.

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways: Jose Gonzalez, Esteban Maroto, Auraleon and Sanjulian to name a few. That is how I love you. Ever since our dear though eccentric Uncle Creepy lost the old greets like Reed Crandall (Lost? Uncle says there's a Reed Crandall piece coming up in Creepy #47—ed.), I thought the artwork would never be the same. Thanks to you, VAMPI, your new artists rival the talents of the greatest master of all, "Prince Valiant" artist Hal Foster. After all these years of reading VAMPIRELLA, Creepy and Eerie and having mixed emotions about the quality of each issue, the latest VAMPIRELLA #16, brought together all of my favorites.

BRUCE BALSEY
Rochester, N.Y.



Cause of much letter page comment this go-around is "Purification," a three-page humor piece written and illustrated by Nebot from VAMPIRELLA #16. Writes El Segundo, Calif. reader **DRAKE LETCHER**, "Who's this Nebot? You know who I'm talking about. The guy who drew that great story 'Purification.' His work is really fabulous! Give us more Nebot. Wow! Great! Fantastic! Super! Out of sight!"

"Girl on the Red Asteroid" in VAMPIRELLA #16 was terrific!

ALFREDO ALFONSO JR.
Miami, Fla.

"And be a Bride of Chaos" in VAMPIRELLA #16 was by far the best story I've read in the last two years! And that Gonzalez art. It's really too much. The way he pictured Count Mordante's castle on p.9 of VAMPIRELLA #16 was so good that I was tempted to frame it. "Purification" was rather childish. What right does Uncle Creepy have paning your face and making cracks about your book? (See the letters pages of Creepy #45—ed.) Both Creepy and lead-belly Eerie are so far behind you, it's ridiculous.

FRED TESKA
Yorktown Heights, N.Y.

How true. How true.

Bela Lugosi never did look like I pictured Dracula. Gonzalez' Dracula is much closer to the real thing. The best love horror story I've ever read is "Cilia" in VAMPIRELLA #16. It was excellent.

C.D. Stinnett, Texas

Sanjulian's cover of VAMPIRELLA #16 was beautiful. I'm distressed however by the continued use of the forces of Chaos in the VAMPIRELLA series. A pure diet of Chaos, however formidable a foe he is, tends to take the versatility out of the series.

BRIAN IVERSON
Spokane, Wash.

"Cilia" in VAMPIRELLA #16 was truly unbelievable.

JERRI ROWLAND
Wrightsville, Ga.

Enjoyed "Purification" in VAMPIRELLA #16. "Gorilla My Dreams" had quite a surprise ending. Didn't much care for "Girl on the Red Asteroid." Sanjulian's cover was magnificent! Have more covers with VAMPIRELLA as she's the star!

PAUL GORDON
Miami, Fla.

Sanjulian's cover of VAMPIRELLA #16 was wild! "Purification" was a refreshing change of pace. Stories like that are just another reason why your magazine is so great. "Cilia" was billed as one of the most beautiful horror stories ever told and I have to agree with that.

JOHN KIMBLE
Willingboro, N.J.

VAMPIRELLA #16 was more like it! Like VAMPIRELLA #12 that is. I really sank my fangs in. "And be a Bride of Chaos" and "Gorilla My Dreams" were superb. The artwork in "Girl on the Red Asteroid" was great. "Cilia" was really good. We want a VAMPI poster.

JOSEPH JIMENEZ
Los Angeles, Ca.

I started this letter twice before realizing that I can't really find the right words to express my appreciation of VAMPIRELLA. I consider myself a comics connoisseur of sorts (I own over 2,000 comics), and I must say that the best comic book around is VAMPIRELLA.

ERIK FLESCH
Cleveland, Ohio

I loved that story about Dracula and VAMPI in VAMPIRELLA #16.

BOB MORRIS
Plainfield, Ill.

"Horrific" is the only word that adequately describes VAMPIRELLA #16. "Cilia" truly was one of the greatest horror stories ever told. Cheers for Gonzalez' rendering of the castle of Count Mordante on p.9 of VAMPIRELLA #16. Unfortunately, the story "Purification" just did not compute. I hope you stick to straight horror and leave the humor strips where they belong. VAMPI's Flames and VAMPI's Feary Tales are monstrous. I really dig them. More horror!

MIKE POWELL
Delmar, Delaware

One thing I've noticed lately is the injection of social relevance into stories about werewolves and monsters. Forget it! Relevance ruins comics. Love the VAMPIRELLA series but isn't the idea of people laying in Dracula's coffin (see VAMPIRELLA #16, p.25—ed.) getting a little tired?

EARL JONES
Ontario, Canada

What a magazine! What fascinating and artistic stories! VAMPIRELLA is pure magical ecstasy!

P. PANAGIS
Cape Province
South Africa

**1 million
READERS
CAN'T BE WRONG!**

...They all asked for A
**VAMPIRELLA
FAN CLUB**

SEE PAGE 61

Gasp! Only 2,000 LETTERS this MORNING!

Poor Vampi's maudlin! The postman only counted out 2,000 Scarlet Letters this morning. What's wrong? Writer's cramp? Address all Scarlet Stationery to:

SCARLET LETTERS
c/o Warren Publishing Co.
145 East 32nd Street
New York, N.Y. 10016



FOR CONRAD VAN HELSING, IT HAS BEEN A LONG JOURNEY- TAKING HIM FROM THE SUNNY BUT TURBULENT ISLAND REPUBLIC OF COTE DE SOLEIL, TO THE COLD AND DREARY GROUNDS OF THE VAN HELSING FAMILY MANSION. BUT THERE IS NO JOY IN THIS HOMECOMING, ONLY HATRED FOR THE GIRL CALLED... **VAMPIRELLA**.



LIKE ME TO CARRY
THOSE BAGS IN FOR YOU,
SIR? I MEAN, IT MUST
BE HARD...BEING
BLIND!

I ASSURE YOU, DRIVER,
I CAN FIND MY WAY AROUND
THESE GROUNDS BETTER
BLIND THAN YOU CAN
SIGHTED!

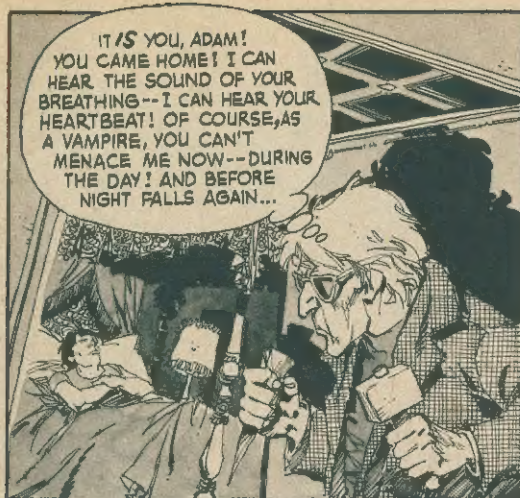
*SEE VAMPIRELLA*15
"THE RESURRECTION
OF PAPA VOUDOU."

I WILL
NOT FORGET,
VAMPIRELLA, HOW YOU
LURED MY SON FROM ME
ON COTE DE SOLEIL!
EVEN THEN I WAS FOOLISH
ENOUGH TO TRUST YOU--
UNTIL MY *SIXTH SENSE*
TOLD ME WHAT I SHOULD
HAVE KNOWN ALL ALONG--
THAT YOU HAD KILLED
HIM AND TURNED HIM
INTO A VAMPIRE
LIKE YOURSELF!

(CHOKE) IT'S
BEEN A LONG TIME
SINCE I'VE BEEN
HOME -- FAR TOO
LONG! ONCE THESE
ANCIENT HALLS WERE
FILLED WITH JOY! BUT
NOW, ADAM, MY SON--
WITH YOU DEAD,
THERE IS ONLY
EMPTINESS HERE!

THE SAME SIXTH
SENSE THAT TOLD
ME SHE HAD MADE
YOU A VAMPIRE, ADAM--
ALSO TOLD ME YOU
WOULD RETURN HERE,
TO OUR ONCE
BELOVED HOME! THAT
IS WHY I TOO
RETURNED...

TO FREE
YOUR
TORMENTED
SOUL!



AND ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE WORLD, HIGH IN THE
TRANSYLVANIAN ALPS, WHERE NIGHT HAS ALREADY
FALLEN, **ANOTHER** VAMPIRE STIRS...

HA! MY CASTLE
IS RUINED BUT WHAT
DOES IT MATTER? I AM
ALIVE, AND HAVE LEARNED
TO CONTROL MY **NEW** BODY
AS WELL AS I DID MY
OLD!



"BUT SOMEHOW, LUCK WAS WITH ME! A
WANDERING DERELICT WAS FOOLISH
ENOUGH TO LIE IN MY COFFIN..."



* SEE **VAMPIRELLA** #16--"AND BE A BRIDE OF CHAOS"

"AND AS HE DID, MY SOUL ENTERED HIS BODY!"


"I SUMMONED VAMPIRE BATS TO ATTACK MY NEW BODY SO THE TRANSFORMATION WOULD BE COMPLETE..."

I'VE DONE IT!
I, DRACULA, HAVE TAKEN
POWER OVER THE BODY
OF THIS PATHETIC
DERELICT!


SKREEP
SKREEP
SKREEP

"IT IS DONE! MY POWERS - MY VERY APPEARANCE - THEY ARE ALL RETURNED TO ME! I AM AS I WAS -- THANKS TO THE MAGIC OF THE MAD GOD CHAOS WHOM I SERVE! NOW, **VAMPIRELLA**, BEWARE! FOR YOU WILL SOON LEARN THAT..."

DRACULA
STILL
LIVES!



ALL THIS HAS COME TO
PASS SINCE VAMPIRELLA AND I
LAST LOCKED HORNS! BUT THE
HOUR OF OUR NEXT CONFRONTATION-
AND VAMPIRELLA'S **DOOM**-
DRAWS NEAR!




ALL THAT REMAINS
NOW IS TO SUMMON THE
FORCES OF THE MAD GOD
CHAOS TO HELP ME DESTROY
HER! AND THAT I CAN DO NOW
THROUGH THE CHIRMSON
CHRONICLES-THE MAGICAL
BOOK WHICH SOMEHOW
ESCAPED DESTRUCTION
WHEN MY CASTLE FELL!



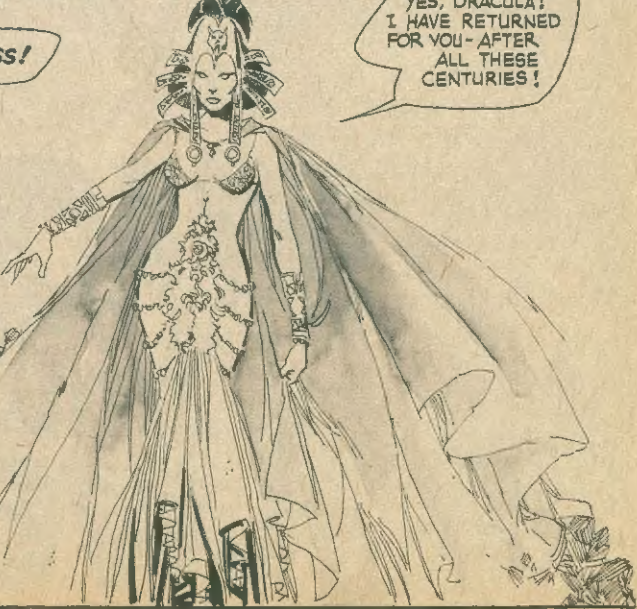
WHAT!
WHAT'S
THAT?!



NO! NO!
IT CAN'T
BE!



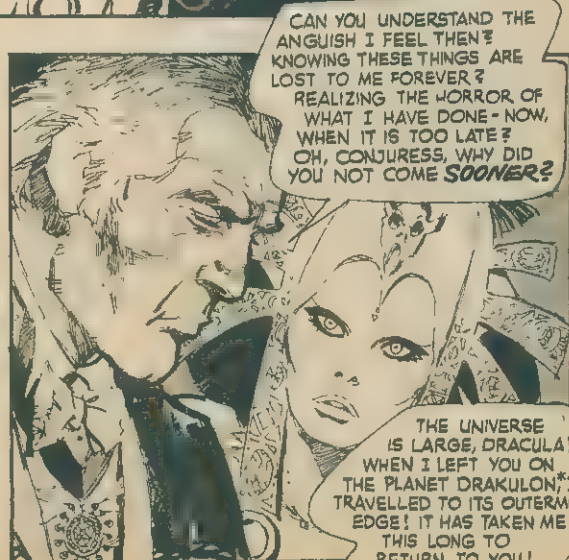
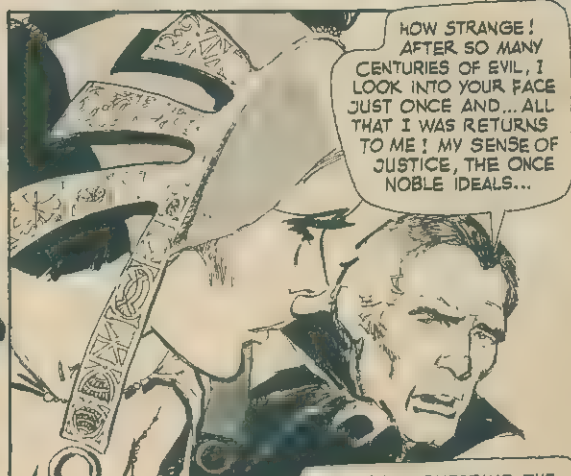
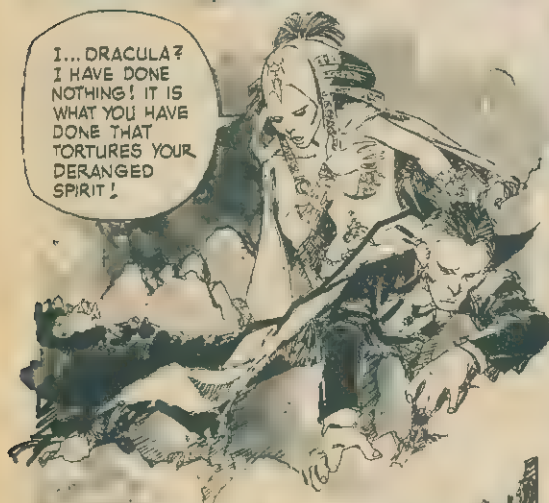
THE CONJURESS!



YES, DRACULA!
I HAVE RETURNED
FOR YOU-AFTER
ALL THESE
CENTURIES!

AND IN THAT ONE BRIEF MOMENT, A THING LONG
FORGOTTEN IS REBORN IN THE SOUL OF **DRACULA...**

A THING CALLED GUILT, A REMEMBRANCE OF
INNOCENCE AND INNOCENCE LOST, AND OF THINGS
DONE WHICH CAN NEVER BE UNDONE...



THE UNIVERSE IS LARGE, DRACULA! WHEN I LEFT YOU ON THE PLANET DRAKULON, I TRAVELLED TO ITS OUTERMOST EDGE! IT HAS TAKEN ME THIS LONG TO RETURN TO YOU!

*FOR MORE OF DRACULA AND HIS HOME PLANET, DRAKULON, SEE VAMPIRELLA #16...
"AND BE A BRIDE OF CHAOS."

I HAVE RETURNED TO TAKE YOUR HAND AND LEAD YOU FROM WHAT YOU ARE, TO WHAT YOU *WERE!* IT WILL NOT BE AN EASY JOURNEY, DRACULA! IT WILL BE FRAUGHT WITH SUFFERING, FOR ONLY IN THAT WAY CAN YOU ATONE FOR WHAT YOU HAVE DONE! BUT THROUGH IT ALL, I WILL BE AT YOUR SIDE! ARE YOU WILLING?

THE CONJURESS GESTURES AND THE SCENE SHIFTS...

IF YOU DO THIS BUT FOR MY SAKE, DRACULA, YOU HAVE MUCH TO LEARN! STILL, YOUR HEART IS READY, WHATEVER THE REASON... BE BRAVE, FOR NOW... IT **DOES BEGIN!**

YES, I ACCEPT WHATEVER ORDEALS I MUST FACE, FOR YOUR SAKE, AND YOURS ALONE! FOR WITH YOU AT MY SIDE, HELL ITSELF WOULD BECOME PARADISE, AND ITS SULPHUROUS FLAMES LAPPING AT MY FLESH WOULD BE AS THE SUNSHINE ON A SUMMER'S MORNING! I AM READY! LET THE JOURNEY BEGIN!

BEHOLD, DRACULA! ...THE PATH OF ATONEMENT!

MEANWHILE, AT THE VAN HELSING FAMILY MANSION, CONRAD VAN HELSING HAS BEEN SUBDUED, AND BEGINS TO UNDERSTAND...

OF COURSE I WAS SLEEPING DURING THE DAY! I CAME HERE ONLY A FEW HOURS AGO, AFTER BATTLING CHAOS WITH VAMPI IN THE FLORIDA EVERGLADES! * LUCKY FOR ME, SHE HEARD YOU COME IN!

HOW CAN I EVER FORGIVE MYSELF FOR THIS, ADAM? I WAS SO SURE SHE HAD BITTEN YOU AND MADE YOU A VAMPIRE! MY SIXTH SENSE TOLD ME THAT WHILE I WAS STILL ON COTE DE SOLEIL! I-I CAN'T UNDERSTAND IT!

* SEE VAMPIRELLA #17: "BEWARE, DREAMERS"



BUT THE REAL HORROR OF IT IS THIS! I HEARD YOUR HEARTBEAT AND YOUR BREATHING WHEN I ENTERED YOUR ROOM! THAT ALONE SHOULD HAVE TOLD ME YOU WERE NOT A VAMPIRE! A PERSON WHO BECOMES A VAMPIRE BY BEING BITTEN HAS NO HEARTBEAT DURING THE DAY! ANYONE KNOWS THAT! VAMPIRELLA IS DIFFERENT, OF COURSE, SINCE SHE COMES FROM THE PLANET DRAKULON, WHERE VAMPIRISM IS A NATURAL, INHERITED CHARACTERISTIC!

IT'S ALL RIGHT, DAD, WE ALL MAKE MISTAKES!



MISTAKES - YES! BUT MY STUPID MISTAKE ALMOST COST YOU YOUR LIFE! HOW COULD MY SIXTH SENSE HAVE TOLD ME SHE HAD PUT HER VAMPIRE'S BITE ON YOU? HOW COULD I HAVE BEEN SO WRONG? PERHAPS - PERHAPS I AM TOO OLD TO CONTINUE MY BATTLE AGAINST THE FORCES OF EVIL!

DR. VAN Helsing, THERE'S SOMETHING... I MUST TELL YOU!

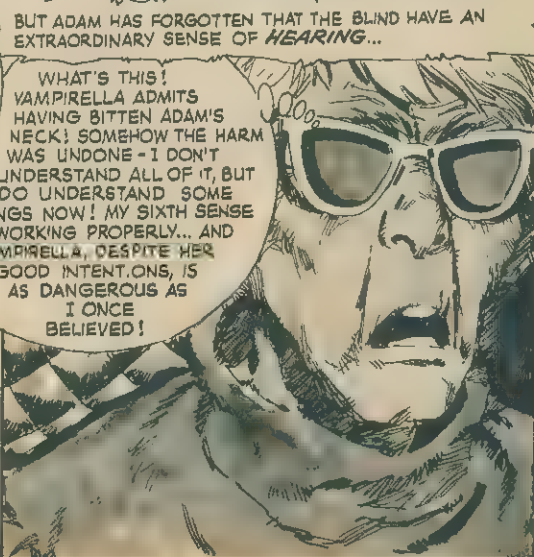


VAMPIRELLA! MAY I SPEAK WITH YOU IN THE NEXT ROOM - ALONE!



I CAN'T LET HIM GO ON DOUBTING HIMSELF LIKE THIS, ADAM! YOU AND I KNOW HE'S **RIGHT!** I **DID** BITE YOUR THROAT--AND THE ONLY REASON YOU'RE ALIVE NOW IS THAT IT ALL HAPPENED IN A DREAM WORLD*, WHERE NOTHING WAS REAL! BUT I DIDN'T KNOW THAT AT THE TIME - THAT IS THE GUILT I MUST CARRY!

NO, YOU FOOL! DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND THAT IF HE KNOWS THAT, HE'LL TRY TO KEEP US APART AGAIN! HE MUST NEVER BE TOLD WHAT YOU DID - WE HAVE FAR TOO MUCH TO LOSE!

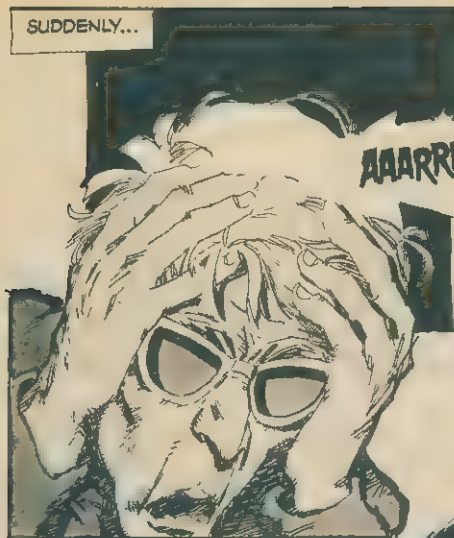


BUT ADAM HAS FORGOTTEN THAT THE BLIND HAVE AN EXTRAORDINARY SENSE OF **HEARING**...

WHAT'S THIS! VAMPIRELLA ADMITS HAVING BITTEN ADAM'S NECK! SOMEHOW THE HARM WAS UNDONE - I DON'T UNDERSTAND ALL OF IT, BUT I DO UNDERSTAND SOME THINGS NOW! MY SIXTH SENSE IS WORKING PROPERLY... AND VAMPIRELLA, DESPITE HER GOOD INTENTIONS, IS AS DANGEROUS AS I ONCE BELIEVED!

* SEE VAMPIRELLA - "BEWARE, DREAMERS!"

SUDDENLY...



DAD!
WHAT'S
WRONG!

MY SIXTH SENSE! I'VE
JUST RECEIVED A MESSAGE
OF UNIMAGINABLE HORROR! I WAS
PREVENTED FROM RECEIVING IT
BEFORE, BECAUSE MY THOUGHTS
WERE TOO CENTERED ON YOU,
SON! BUT NOW I FEEL IT...
DRACULA STILL LIVES!

WHAT?!
I THOUGHT
WE'D KILLED
HIM!

WHAT WAS THAT
REMARK SUPPOSED
TO MEAN? COULD HE
HAVE HEARD US?

ALL RIGHT,
I BELIEVE YOU!
BUT WHAT
CAN WE DO?

NO,
VAMPIRELLA!
MY SIXTH
SENSE
IS NEVER
WRONG!

THIS TIME, I HAVE
A PLAN! ADAM, GO
TO THE EAST WING
AND BRING ME
MERLIN'S MIRROR!

ADAM'S
FATHER IS NOT
WITHOUT HIS
OCCULT
WARES.

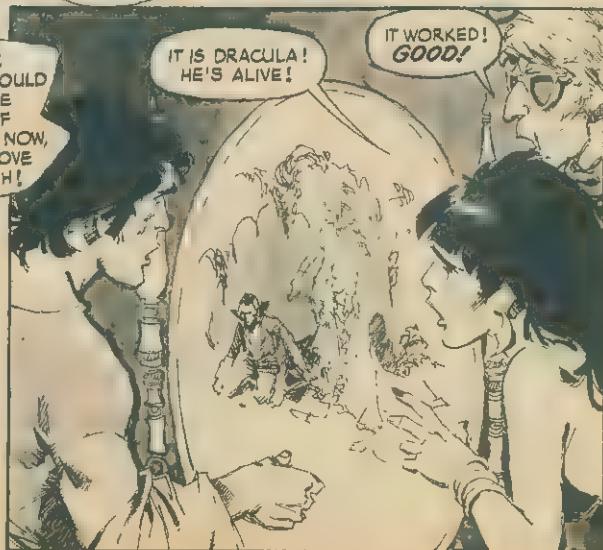
SOON...



MY PSYCHIC
POWERS SHOULD
BRING US THE
VISION OF
DRACULA! NOW,
ADAM, REMOVE
THE CLOTH!

IT IS DRACULA!
HE'S ALIVE!

IT WORKED!
GOOD!



CONRAD VAN HELSING
EXPLAINS HIS PLAN...

FROM WHAT YOU'VE SEEN
IN MERLIN'S MIRROR, AND
FROM WHAT MY SIXTH SENSE
TELLS ME, IT SEEMS THAT
DRACULA HAS ENTERED SOME
OTHER PLANE OF
EXISTENCE! THAT
MEANS WE CAN'T
REACH HIM BY
NATURAL
MEANS!

BUT THROUGH THE MIRROR,
WE CAN REACH HIM! MERLIN'S
MIRROR IS ALSO A
TELEPORTATION DEVICE...
THROUGH WHICH WE CAN
SEND VAMPIRELLA TO THE
STRANGE WORLD WHERE
DRACULA EXISTS! THERE--
SHE CAN DESTROY HIM!

VAMPIRELLA!!
NO, DAD, I CAN'T
LET YOU! IT'S TOO
DANGEROUS FOR
HER! SEND **ME**
INSTEAD!

I MUST GO,
ADAM! NO MERE MORTAL
HAS EVER MANAGED TO
DEFEAT DRACULA FOR GOOD!
THIS IS A TASK I MUST
TAKE ON, USING ALL MY
DRAKULONIAN POWERS!

THEN
LET ME GO
WITH YOU!

SOON...

GOOD BYE,
VAMPIRELLA! I'LL
HOPE FOR YOU... I
GUESS THAT'S ALL
I CAN DO!

SHE'S
RIGHT--WHAT GOOD
COULD IT POSSIBLY
BE TO HER? IF ONLY
I HAD MORE TO
OFFER! IF ONLY I
COULD **HELP**
HER IN SOME
WAY!

DON'T WORRY,
ADAM--I'VE BEEN
THROUGH WORSE
THAN THIS!

BUT NOT **MUCH**
WORSE! BEFORE THIS
IS THROUGH, I MAY NEED
ADAM'S HELP! BUT I HAD
TO REFUSE HIM--I CAN'T
LET HIM RISK HIS LIFE
FOR ME AGAIN! THE
BATTLE AGAINST
DRACULA IS MINE
AND MINE ALONE!

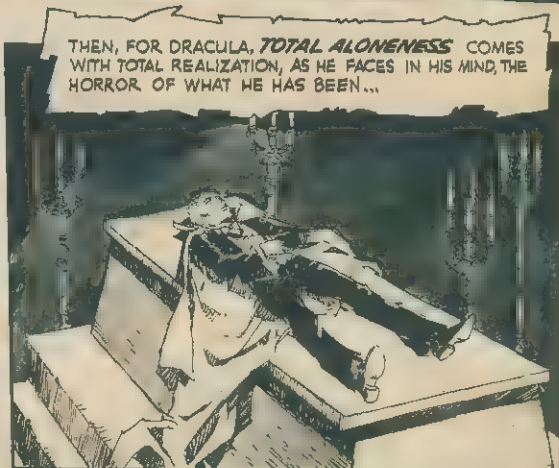
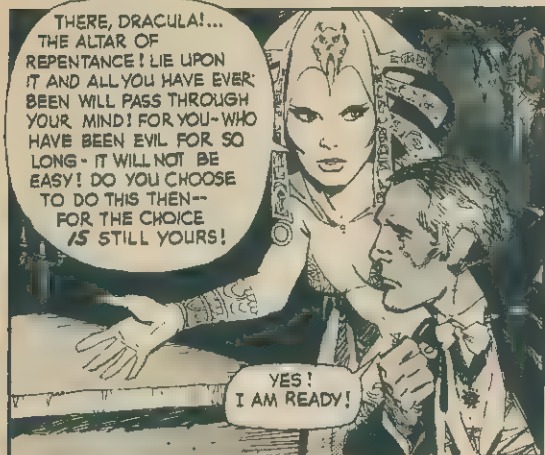
REMEMBER,
VAMPIRELLA-- WHEN
DRACULA IS DESTROYED,
YOU NEED ONLY **WILL**
YOURSELF TO RETURN
THROUGH THE MIRROR!

DAD!
THE MIRROR IS
CLOUDING-- I CAN'T
SEE HER ANYMORE!

THE MIRROR
IS OLD, ADAM! IT'S
BEEN DRAINED BY THE
ACT OF
TELEPORTATION! NOW...
WE CAN ONLY WAIT!

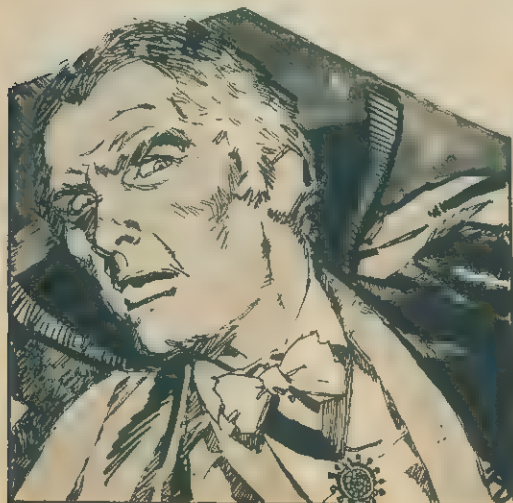
NO! I'M
SORRY, ADAM!
WE DON'T KNOW
WHAT THAT OTHER WORLD
BEYOND THE MIRROR IS
LIKE! SOMEONE LACKING
SUPERHUMAN POWERS
MIGHT BE ONLY
A HINDRANCE!

MEANWHILE, DRACULA WALKS THE *PATH OF ATONEMENT...*



THE MEMORIES WEIGH HEAVY ON HIS TORTURED SOUL...

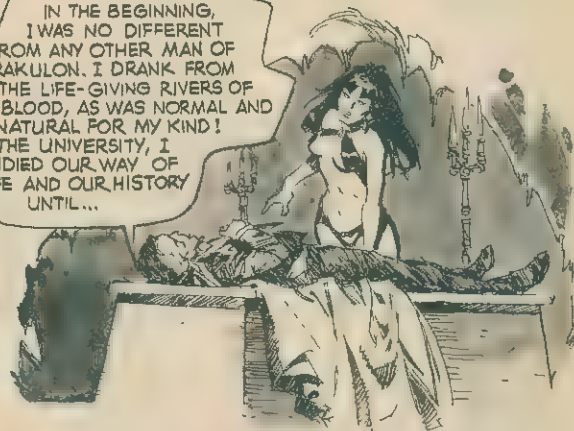
TILL AT LAST, HE IS DRAWN INTO HIS MEMORIES! HE LIES ON THE ALTAR OF REPENTANCE, SEMI-CONSCIOUS, SEMI-DELIRIOUS, ONLY DIMLY AWARE OF HIS SURROUNDINGS, BUT *PAINFULLY* AWARE OF THE AGONIZING MEMORIES, FLASHING THROUGH HIS MIND LIKE THE PAGES OF A BOOK BEING TURNED TOO FAST...



THEN, AT THAT VERY MOMENT. *VAMPIRELLA* COMES...



IN THE BEGINNING, I WAS NO DIFFERENT FROM ANY OTHER MAN OF DRAKULON. I DRANK FROM THE LIFE-GIVING RIVERS OF BLOOD, AS WAS NORMAL AND NATURAL FOR MY KIND! AT THE UNIVERSITY, I STUDIED OUR WAY OF LIFE AND OUR HISTORY UNTIL...



"I TOOK MY FINDINGS TO THE HIGH COUNCIL OF DRAKULON."

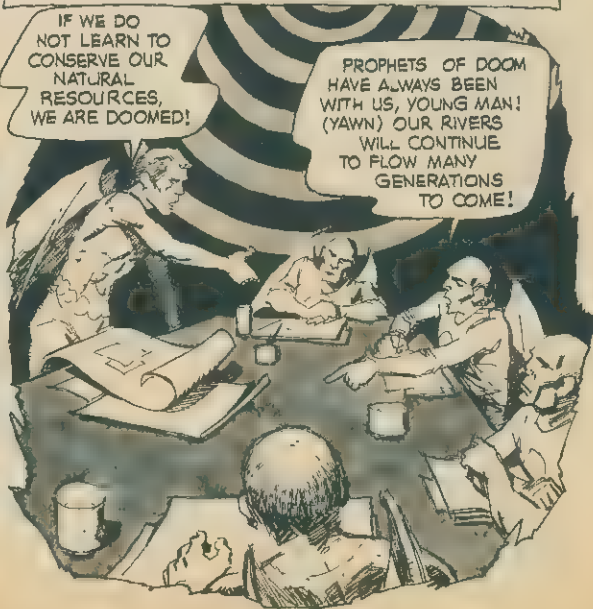
"UNTIL ONE DAY, I MADE A STARTLING DISCOVERY..."

GREAT GALAXIES! THESE CHARTS INDICATE THAT OUR RIVERS OF BLOOD ARE *DRYING UP!* EVER SO SLOWLY, YES, BUT AT AN EVER-INCREASING RATE! IF IT CONTINUES... ALL LIFE ON DRAKULON IS DOOMED!

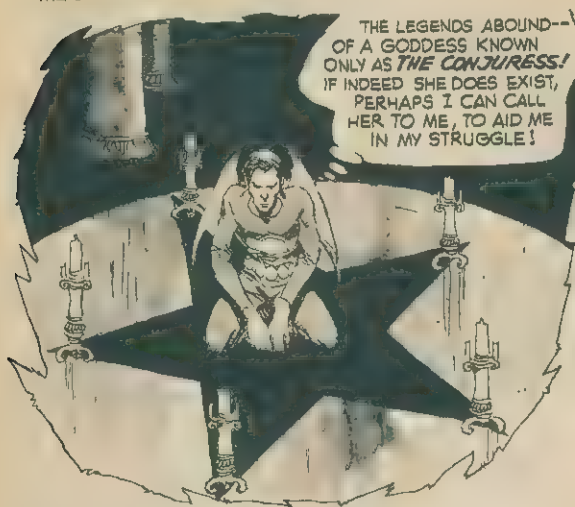


IF WE DO NOT LEARN TO CONSERVE OUR NATURAL RESOURCES, WE ARE DOOMED!

PROPHETS OF DOOM HAVE ALWAYS BEEN WITH US, YOUNG MAN! (YAWN) OUR RIVERS WILL CONTINUE TO FLOW MANY GENERATIONS TO COME!



"WHEN NO ONE WOULD LISTEN, I SOUGHT AN ALLY THROUGH
THE **OLD WAYS**... WITCHCRAFT!"



THE LEGENDS ABOUND--
OF A GODDESS KNOWN
ONLY AS **THE CONJURESS!**
IF INDEED SHE DOES EXIST,
PERHAPS I CAN CALL
HER TO ME, TO AID ME
IN MY STRUGGLE!

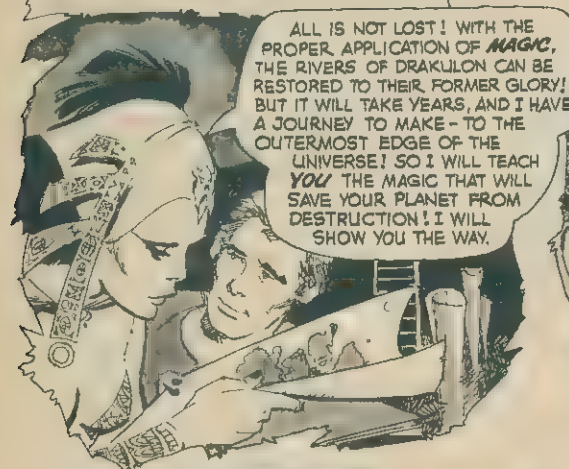
"THEN..."



I HAVE HEARD YOUR
CALL! NOW-SPEAK! WHAT
IS IT YOU WISH? IF IT IS
JUST, I WILL TRY TO
GRANT IT!

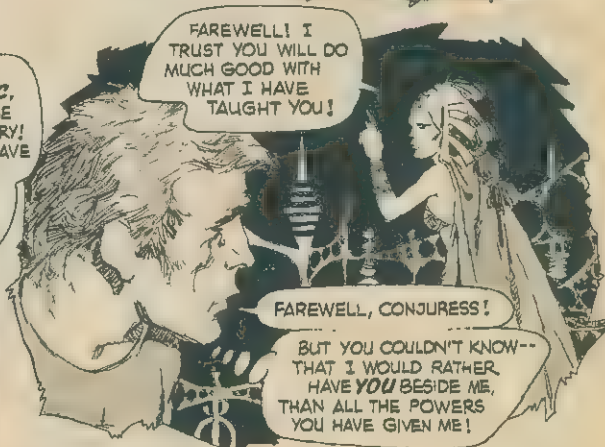
THE CONJURESS!

"AND IN THE WEEKS AND MONTHS TO COME..."



ALL IS NOT LOST! WITH THE
PROPER APPLICATION OF **MAGIC**,
THE RIVERS OF DRAKULON CAN BE
RESTORED TO THEIR FORMER GLORY!
BUT IT WILL TAKE YEARS, AND I HAVE
A JOURNEY TO MAKE-- TO THE
OUTERMOST EDGE OF THE
UNIVERSE! SO I WILL TEACH
YOU THE MAGIC THAT WILL
SAVE YOUR PLANET FROM
DESTRUCTION! I WILL
SHOW YOU THE WAY.

FAREWELL! I
TRUST YOU WILL DO
MUCH GOOD WITH
WHAT I HAVE
TAUGHT YOU!



FAREWELL, CONJURESS!

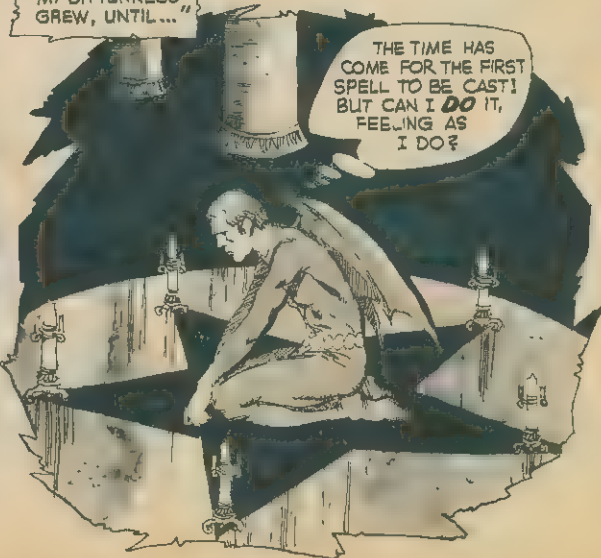
BUT YOU COULDN'T KNOW--
THAT I WOULD RATHER
HAVE **YOU** BESIDE ME,
THAN ALL THE POWERS
YOU HAVE GIVEN ME!

"MY BITTERNESS
GREW, UNTIL..."



NO, CONJURESS,
YOU COULDN'T KNOW
THAT I LOVED YOU!
WHAT DOES A GODDESS
KNOW OF HUMAN
EMOTION!

THE TIME HAS
COME FOR THE FIRST
SPELL TO BE CAST!
BUT CAN I **DO** IT,
FEELING AS
I DO?



"BUT AS I BEGAN THE SPELL..."

I MUST
CALL THE SPIRITS
TO HELP ME WITH MY
MAGIC! BUT MY HEART IS
FILLED WITH BITTERNESS,
NOW THAT *SHE* IS GONE!
WHAT MANNER OF EVIL
THING WILL COME TO
ME, IF I ATTEMPT THIS
NOW? BUT NO
MATTER--IT MUST
BE DONE!

WHAT
HAVE
I DONE?!

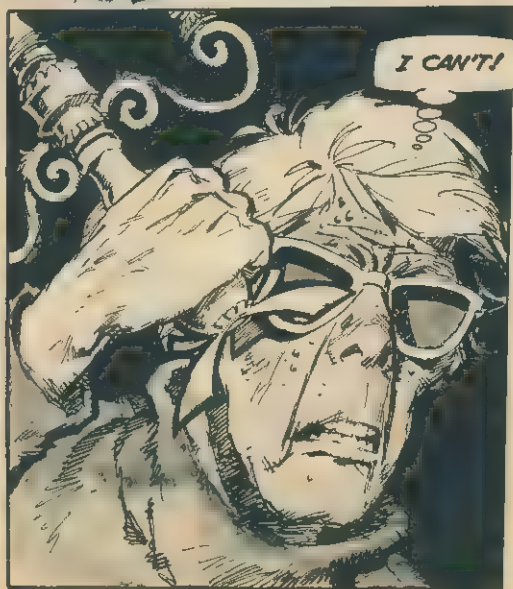
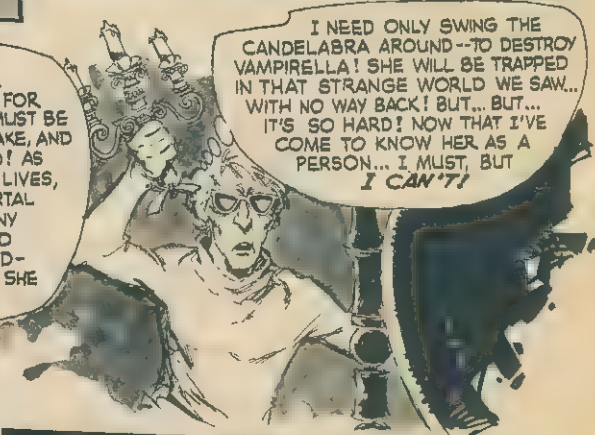
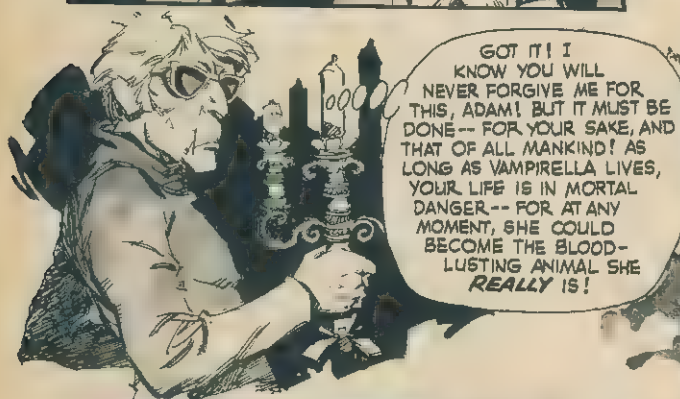
YOU CALL,
MAN OF DRAKULON!
AND THE GREAT GOD
CHAOS ANSWERS!

FORGET THE
CONJURESS, FOOL!
SHE CARED NOTHING FOR YOU--
SHE IS GONE, AND YOU SHALL
NEVER SEE HER AGAIN! THINK
NOT OF YOUR COUNTRYMEN AT
SUCH A TIME--FOR THEY TOO
SCORN YOUR PATHETIC
DEVOTION! *LET* ALL OF
DRAKULON DIE--FOR...
IF YOU SERVE ME, YOU
SHALL LIVE ON!

THE STRENGTH
OF CHAOS WAS TOO GREAT,
AND MY OWN DESPAIR, TOO
DEEP! I BECAME HIS SERVANT,
KILLING FELLOW DRAKULONIANS
I HAD ONCE SWORN TO SAVE!
AT LAST, I WAS EXECUTED ON
DRAKULON... BUT CHAOS RENEWED
ME... ORDERED ME TO EARTH!
FOR CENTURIES, I SERVED HIM
THERE, AS WELL! BUT THEN,
CONJURESS, I SAW YOUR FACE
AGAIN, AND REMEMBERED YOUR
TRUST! I WANTED SO
DESPERATELY... TO TURN
BACK THE HANDS OF TIME,
TO UNDO THE EVIL I HAVE
DONE... TO BECOME
AS I WAS ...

HOW STRANGE TO
HEAR THE REASONING OF
EVIL! SAD! BUT I MUST NOT
THINK OF THAT... I HAVE A DUTY...
DRACULA MUST DIE! MY FANGS
WILL DRAIN THE LIFE BLOOD
FROM HIS BODY, AND
IT WILL BE OVER!

AND AT THE VAN Helsing FAMILY MANSION...



STOP, DAD!
PLEASE!

UHhhh!

THEN...

CRASH!

VAMPIRELLA!
YOU'VE
DOOMED HER!

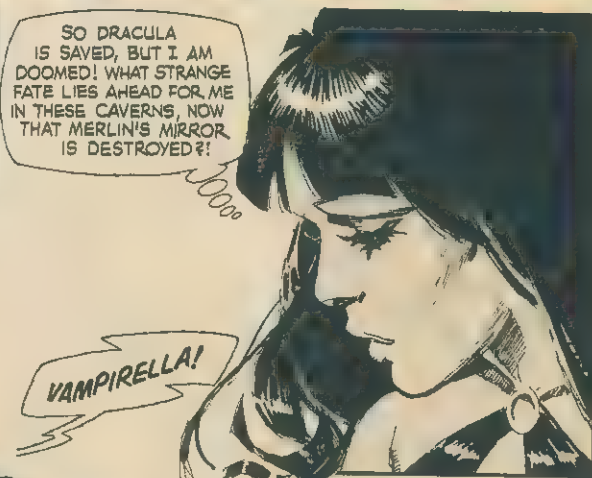
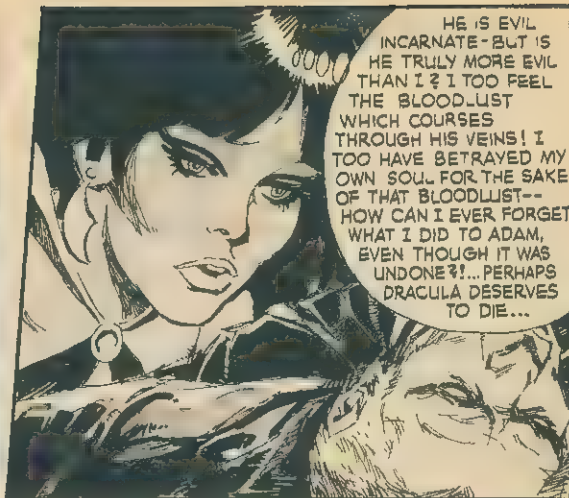
SON, I'M
SORRY! I WASN'T
GOING TO GO
THROUGH WITH IT!
BUT IT'S TOO LATE
NOW! IT'S TOO
LATE!

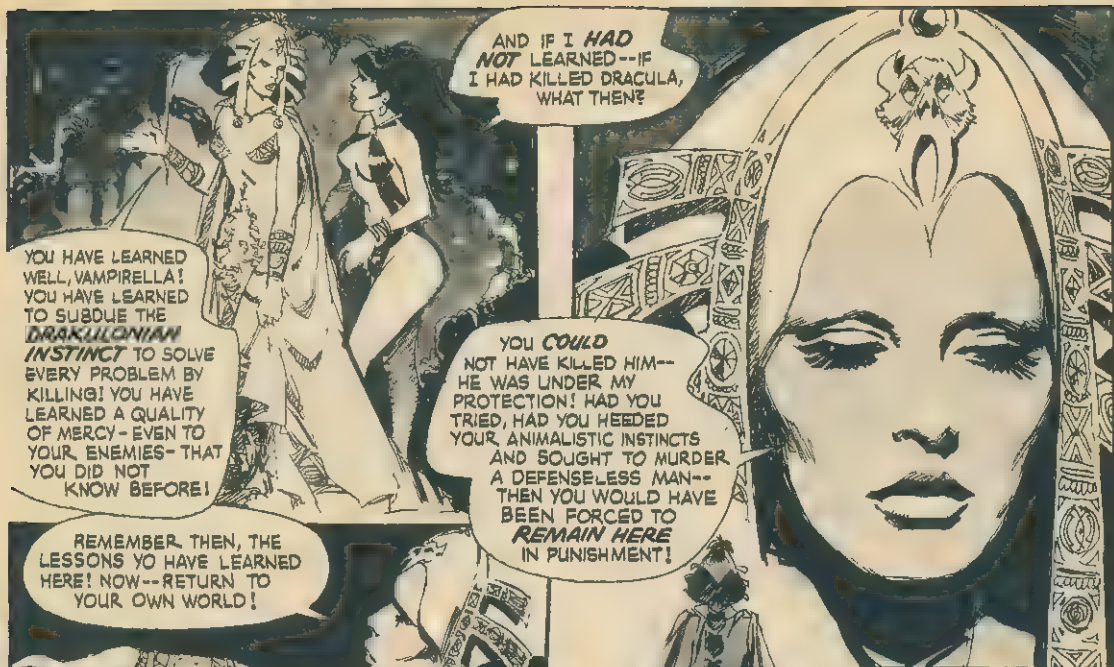
AT THAT SAME MOMENT, IN THE NOWHERE WORLD
WHERE VAMPIRELLA PREPARES TO DESTROY
DRACULA...

THE MIRROR!
MY GATEWAY BACK!
IT'S BEEN DESTROYED--
I CAN FEEL IT IN
MY BRAIN!

SUDDENLY, DRACULA, STILL SEMI-DELIRIOUS IN
HIS BELIEF THAT VAMPIRELLA IS THE CONJURESS,
REACHES OUT AND TAKES HER HAND, SQUEEZING
IT GENTLY...

I'M DOOMED
NOW! (CHOKE) BUT
AT LEAST I CAN DO
WHAT I CAME TO
DO! FAREWELL,
DRACULA!





AND IF I **HAD**
NOT LEARNED--IF
I HAD KILLED DRACULA,
WHAT THEN?

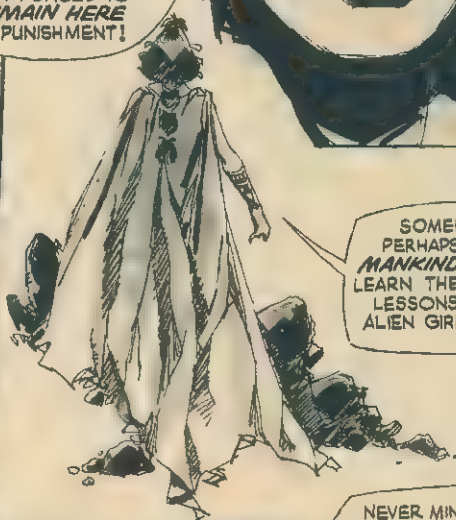
YOU HAVE LEARNED
WELL, VAMPIRELLA!
YOU HAVE LEARNED
TO SUBDUCE THE
DRAKULONIAN
INSTINCT TO SOLVE
EVERY PROBLEM BY
KILLING! YOU HAVE
LEARNED A QUALITY
OF MERCY--EVEN TO
YOUR ENEMIES--THAT
YOU DID NOT
KNOW BEFORE!

YOU **COULD**
NOT HAVE KILLED HIM--
HE WAS UNDER MY
PROTECTION! HAD YOU
TRIED, HAD YOU HEEDED
YOUR ANIMALISTIC INSTINCTS
AND SOUGHT TO MURDER
A DEFENSELESS MAN--
THEN YOU WOULD HAVE
BEEN FORCED TO
REMAIN HERE
IN PUNISHMENT!

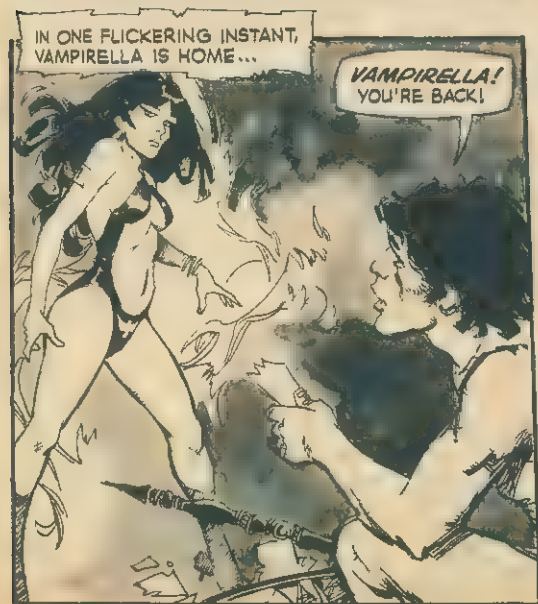
REMEMBER THEN, THE
LESSONS YO HAVE LEARNED
HERE! NOW--RETURN TO
YOUR OWN WORLD!



I--I'M VANISHING!
THANK, YOU, CONJURESS!
FOR **ALL** YOU HAVE DONE!



SOMEDAY,
PERHAPS, **ALL**
MANKIND MAY
LEARN THE SAME
LESSONS THE
ALIEN GIRL HAS!



IN ONE FLICKERING INSTANT,
VAMPIRELLA IS HOME...

VAMPIRELLA!
YOU'RE BACK!



BUT HOW--
HOW??

NEVER MIND THAT,
NOW! I HAVE A
CONFESSION TO MAKE--
I WASN'T ABLE TO
KILL DRACULA!

VAMPIRELLA RELATES HER TALE TO ADAM AND HIS FATHER...

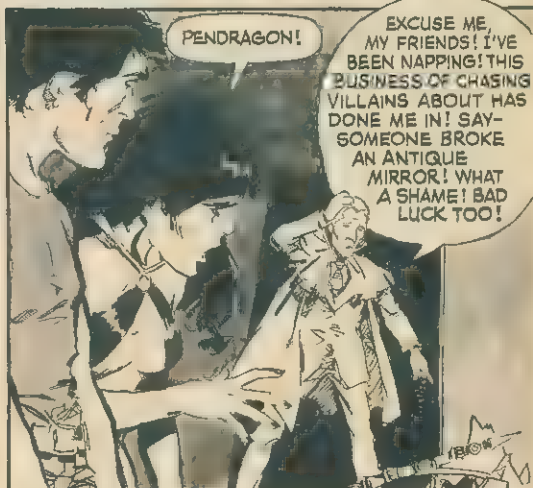
SO I COULDN'T KILL
DRACULA! DO YOU BLAME
ME FOR THAT, DR. VAN
'HELSENG?

IT'S ALL RIGHT,
DR. VAN HELSENG! ALL'S
WELL THAT ENDS WELL! AND
YOU WERE ONLY TRYING TO
PROTECT ADAM! MAYBE
SOMEDAY I CAN CONVINCE YOU
THAT, DESPITE MY VAMPIRISTIC
INSTINCTS, I WILL NEVER
HARM, ADAM!

HOW CAN I BLAME
YOU FOR ANYTHING,
VAMPIRELLA, WHEN I
VERY NEARLY CAUSED
YOUR DEATH?

CONRAD BLURTS OUT HOW HE TRIED TO DESTROY
MERLIN'S MIRROR, THEN *DID* DESTROY IT,
ACCIDENTALLY...

MAYBE SOMEDAY
I CAN CONVINCE
MYSELF TOO!



PENDRAGON!

EXCUSE ME,
MY FRIENDS! I'VE
BEEN NAPPING! THIS
BUSINESS OF CHASING
VILLAINS ABOUT HAS
DONE ME IN! SAY-
SOMEONE BROKE
AN ANTIQUE
MIRROR! WHAT
A SHAME! BAD
LUCK TOO!

PENDRAGON-
YOU DON'T KNOW
HALF OF IT!

AND IN THE CAVERNS OF ATONEMENT,
DRACULA RECOVERS HIS SENSES...

(GASP) IT'S OVER!
MY WHOLE LIFE
PASSED BEFORE
MY EYES!

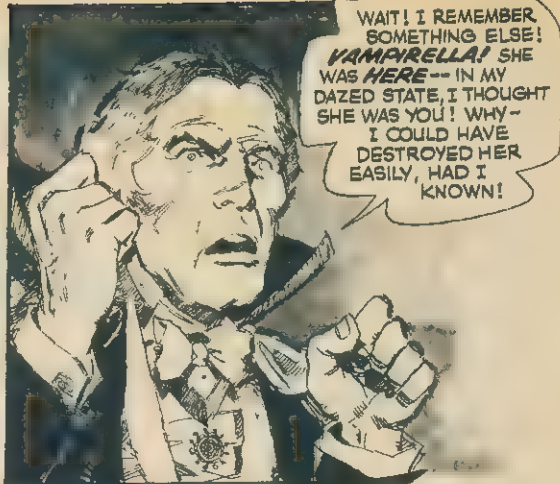
THEN WE ARE
READY FOR THE
**SECOND
STEP!**



I LEARNED
A GREAT DEAL
ON THE ALTAR OF
REPENTANCE,
CONJURESS!

YES, DRACULA,
I AM GLAD!

WE **BOTH** LEARNED
A GREAT DEAL! FOR NOT
UNTIL I HEARD YOUR
WORDS DID I KNOW THAT
ON DRAKULON, YOU LOVED
ME NOT AS A GODDESS,
BUT AS A WOMAN!
HOW BLIND EVEN A
GODDESS CAN BE!



WAIT! I REMEMBER
SOMETHING ELSE!
VAMPIRELLA! SHE
WAS **HERE**-- IN MY
DAZED STATE, I THOUGHT
SHE WAS YOU! WHY--
I COULD HAVE
DESTROYED HER
EASILY, HAD I
KNOWN!



NO, DRACULA!
YOU'RE RETURNING TO
YOUR **OLD** WAYS! YOU MUST
NOT! YOU MUST BE REBORN
NOW-- YOU MUST FORGET
THE PETTY HATREDS
YOU ONCE KNEW!

AFTER SO MANY
CENTURIES OF HORROR,
SO MANY LIVES SNUFFED
OUT BY MY HAND--THERE
IS LITTLE LEFT WORTH
SAVING! HOW THEN CAN
I BE REBORN? CAN MY
SOUL EVER BE WASHED
CLEAN OF THE BLOOD
OF A THOUSAND
INNOCENT
VICTIMS?



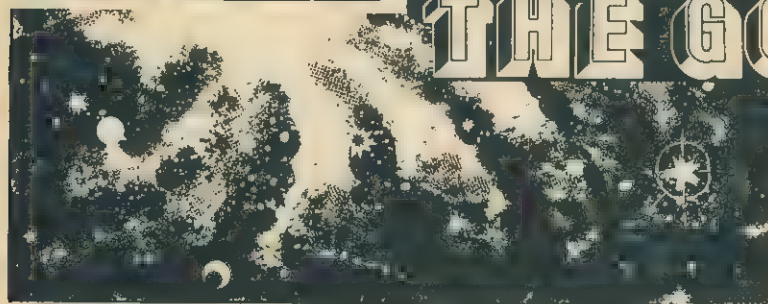
IT WAS EVIL
DRACULA, BUT YOU
DID IT UNDER THE
SPELL OF CHAOS!
IT WAS CHAOS
WHO --




CHAOS?! WHAT DOES
CHAOS MATTER? IT WAS MY
HAND WHICH CARRIED OUT THOSE
FOUL DEEDS! THE NAME OF CHAOS
IS KNOWN TO NO ONE! **MY** NAME
BRINGS HORROR TO THE HEARTS
OF ALL WHO HEAR IT! HOW CAN
I EVER BECOME WHAT I WAS
AGAIN-- EVEN FOR YOUR SAKE?
I AM THE VERY PERSONIFICATION
OF EVIL-- **I AM DRACULA!**

NEXT ISSUE: "THE SHADOW OF DRACULA!"


KALI TOMB OF THE GODS




THE PAST LIES HIDDEN IN THE VAST RECESSES OF TIME AND SPACE, A THING UNKNOWN AMIDST THE EXPLOSIONS OF SULFUROUS FLAMES AND HOWLING GAS-SEOUS WINDS.




THE FORCE OF THE UNIVERSE IS SILENT NOW, AS IF CLUTCHING ITS SECRET TIGHTLY WITHIN... THE SECRET OF THE AGES.



PERHAPS IT IS HERE THAT MAN'S INBORN AWARENESS OF THE SUPERNATURAL AND BELIEF IN THE IMPORTANCE OF MYTH AND LEGEND BEGAN.



SINCE TIME'S DAWNING, ONLY A CHOSEN FEW HAVE POSSESSED THE VERY SECRET OF LIFE ITSELF.



IN THE HANDS OF MEN, POWER CORRUPTS... BECOMES AN INSTRUMENT OF EVIL.

THERE IS MIGHTY
CALIGOR, MAGICIAN AND
MURDERER IN THE
CAUSE OF HEAVENLY
GOOD.



WITNESS THE MAIDEN KALI,
UNCONSCIOUS... A MOST HOSPIT-
ABLE SACRIFICE. HER DEATH WILL
PLEASE THE GREAT GOD AGNI
AND GIVE US THE POWER
WE SEEK.



FOR SHE IS THE ESSENCE
OF LIFE ITSELF... WIND AND
FLOWERS, FRESH AND
YOUNG, OUR DUTY TO
GOD AGNI AWAITS.
LET US PREPARE THE
DEATH RITUAL.



TAM
TAM
TAM



THE DRUMS OF THE VILLAGE HUM AND
THE HYPNOTIC RHYTHM PLUNGES THE UN-
CONSCIOUS KALI INTO A TRANCE... A
TRANCE THAT SINGS OF FREEDOM.

HER SENSES DROWN
IN A SEA OF VISIONS.
FLUTTERING
HUMAN WINGS
PROMISE
ESCAPE.

COME! COME AND LOVE
ME! WAIT WITH ME. YOU
ARE MY LIFE. DO NOT
LEAVE. I AWAIT THE
EMBRACE OF THE
GREAT GOD AGNI.

OH, MAN MOST
BEAUTIFUL! SOON I
WILL POSSESS THOSE
WINGS AND BE ONE
WITH YOU!

TOGETHER WE
ARE FREE. COME,
EMBRACE ME WITH
YOUR WINGS AND
GIVE ME YOUTH
ETERNAL!

AND I WILL LOVE
YOU IN RETURN... SUCH
LOVE AS YOU HAVE
NEVER KNOWN! SOON
I WILL BE AGNI'S
BRIDE AND YOUR
ETERNAL LOVE

BUT THE
DREAM, LIKE
ALL THINGS,
MUST FADE...

EYES LIKE BURNING COALS
TRANSFORM THE DREAM
INTO A BRUTAL REALITY.



FOR THE TIGERS ARE THE
INSTRUMENTS OF MAGICIAN
CALIGOR'S SELFISH PLAN.
THEY SIT CROUCHED,
AWAITING NIGHTFALL AND
A FEAST.



LET US GO, FELLOW TRIBESMEN.
I AM AWARE OF THE TIGERS, SOON
THEY WILL BEGIN MY WORK...
THE MIRACLE OF
THE SACRIFICE!

THE NIGHT IS ONE WITH THE
DARKNESS OF THEIR HEARTS
AS THEY TRUDGE THEIR WAY
THROUGH THE COLD WASTE-
LAND BACK TO THE VILLAGE.



DEEP, ROLLING GROWLS
AWAKEN THE MAIDEN
FROM HER TRANCE.

GREAT GOD AGNI! IS THIS
WHAT THE MAGICIAN CALIGOR
PROMISED ME? AM I TO
BE TRANSFORMED INTO A
FEAST FOR CRUEL
BEASTS?



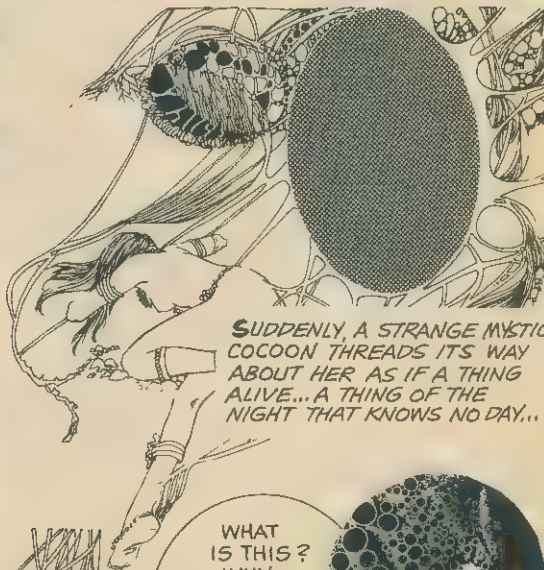
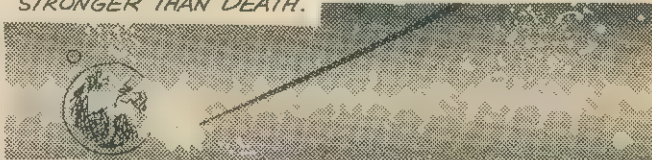
I WILL NOT RENOUNCE
MY LIFE FOR THE WHIM
OF A SELF-SERVING
GOD AND HIS EVIL
MAGICIAN!





KALI WAITS, UNMOVING, A THING OF STILLNESS.

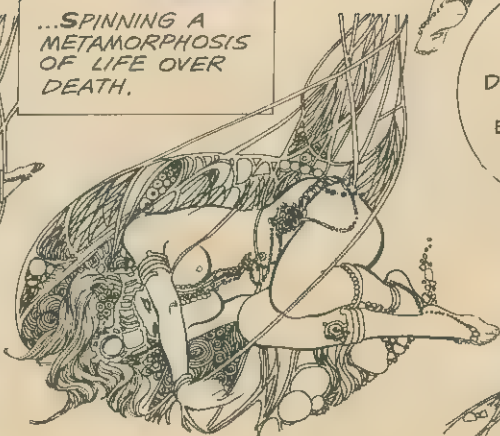
SOMEWHERE IN THE VASTNESS KNOWN AS SPACE, THE SILENT CALL OF KALI IS HEARD. THE STRENGTH OF HER LIFE REVERBERATES LIKE A WAIL THROUGH THE COSMOS, BECKONING TO THAT WHICH IS EVEN STRONGER THAN DEATH.



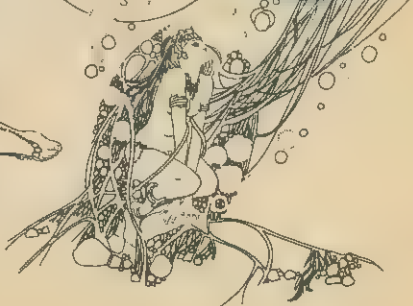
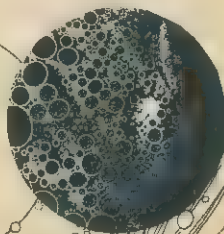
SUDDENLY, A STRANGE MYSTIC COCOON THREADS ITS WAY ABOUT HER AS IF A THING ALIVE... A THING OF THE NIGHT THAT KNOWS NO DAY..



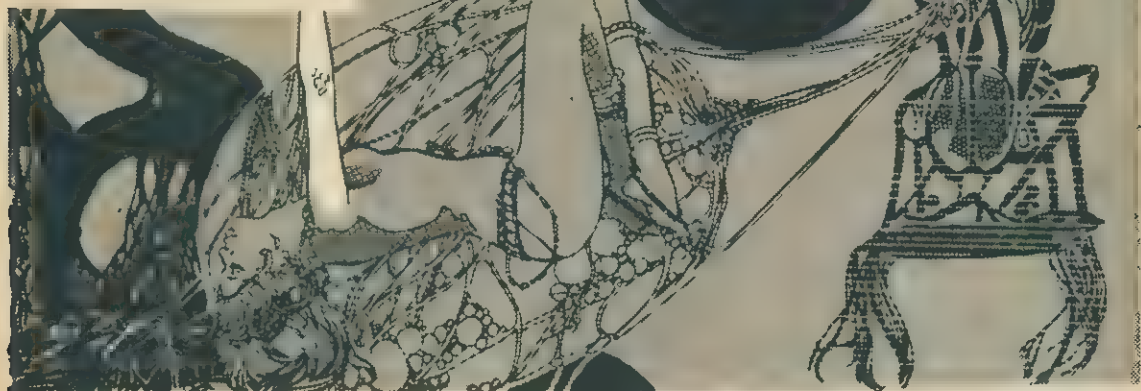
...SPINNING A METAMORPHOSIS OF LIFE OVER DEATH.



WHAT IS THIS?
WHY DOES THIS SILK ENFOLD ME?



"I AM SMOTHERING," SHE WHISPERS, "AS IF IN BIRTH... THOUGH I AM HELD BY NO CORD. ALREADY MY ARM FINDS FREEDOM."



THE PAIN OF RE-BIRTH COMPLETED, KALI EMERGES FROM HER SILKEN WOMB WITH POWERS YET UNKNOWN TO MORTAL MAN.

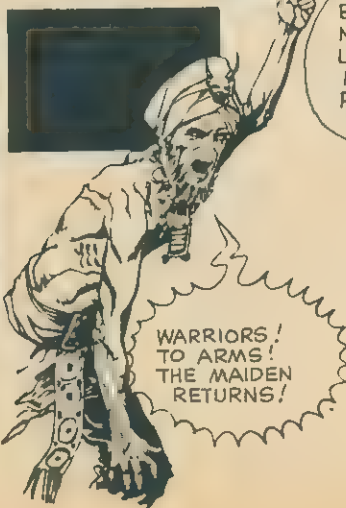


LIKE A WINGLESS BUTTERFLY, KALI IS CARRIED THROUGH THE WIND OF NIGHT.

...THE WHISPER OF GRASS AND FLOWERS! WINDS OF LOVE! "WHY DO I LOVE YOU SO?"



SHE RUNS TO THE VILLAGE SHOUTING, "I AM KALI! I HAVE RETURNED! COME FORTH, FRIENDS! AND I WILL TELL YOU OF THE TIGERS!"



BACK! KALI WILL NOT OFFER HER LIFE AGAIN! SHE HAS FOUND HER POWERS IN THE SACRIFICE!

KILL HER! SHE REFUSES TO BE AN OFFERING TO THE GODS!

WARRIORS! TO ARMS! THE MAIDEN RETURNS!





DISOBEDIENT FOOL!
GREAT ARE THE GODS'
WRATH THAT WILL
DESTROY YOUR
VILLAGE!

THE GODS ARE
NOT WRATHFUL,
NOR DO THEY
DESIRE THE
DEATH OF
MAIDENS.

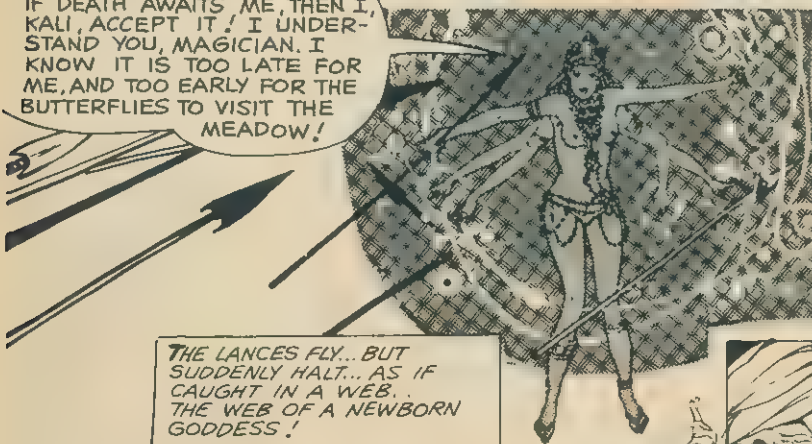


HOW DID
SHE KNOW
THEN THAT SHE
HAD TO DIE?

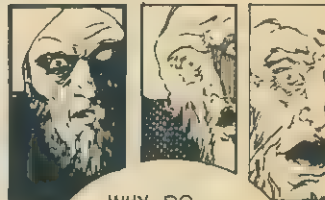


SHE
MUST DIE!
THE GOD AGNI
DEMANDS HER
DEATH!

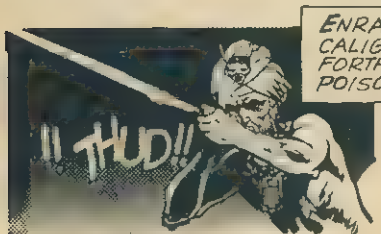
IF DEATH AWAITS ME, THEN I,
KALI, ACCEPT IT! I UNDER-
STAND YOU, MAGICIAN. I
KNOW IT IS TOO LATE FOR
ME, AND TOO EARLY FOR THE
BUTTERFLIES TO VISIT THE
MEADOW!



THE LANCES FLY... BUT
SUDDENLY HALT... AS IF
CAUGHT IN A WEB...
THE WEB OF A NEWBORN
GODDESS!



WHY DO
YOU WAIT?
KILL HER!
THROW YOUR
SPEARS!



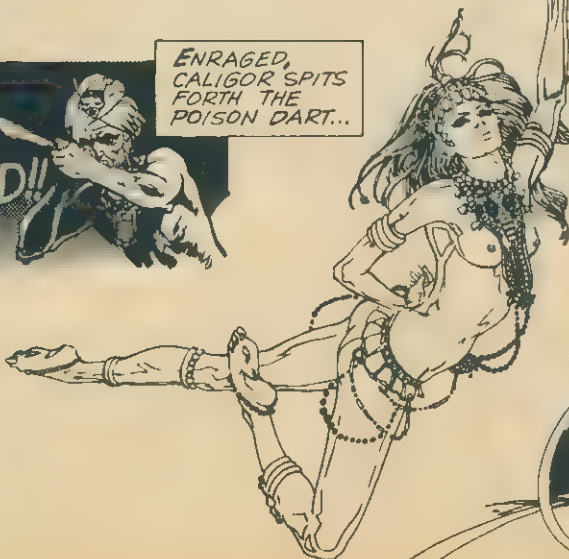
ENRAGED,
CALIGOR SPITS
FORTH THE
POISON DART...

!! THUD!!

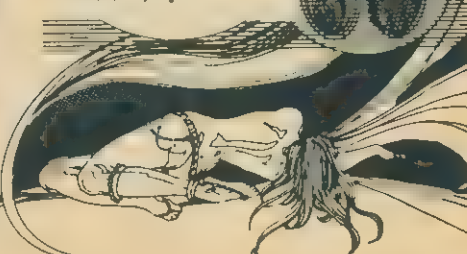


THE
GODDESS
OF LIFE
AFTER DEATH!

IT IS NOT THE
MAIDEN! IT IS
SOME COSMOS-
SPAWNED
BEING!



BUT EYES OF A
FORCE GREATER
THAN POISON ATTEND
THIS LAST SACRIFICE
OF KALI!





ALL THINGS MUST
KNOW AN END...AN
END SOMETIME
KNOWN AS
DEATH

AND SO IT IS THAT THE MAGICIAN'S UNWITTING SKILL
HAS TRANSFORMED THE MAIDEN KALI INTO A GODDESS...
A GODDESS OF ETERNAL BEAUTY... THE WHEEL OF
DEATH AND REBIRTH ENCIRCLES ALL THAT IS MORTAL
WITH THE PROMISE OF IMMORTALITY.



PITY THE POOR PROTAGONIST OF THIS STORY, DAVID WINTERS, CAUGHT IN THE FILMY WEBBING OF LIFE... UNKNOWNING OF THE MANY LIVES OF WOMEN...



DAVID WINTERS HAS PLAYED THIS SCENE BEFORE. ONLY THE BIT PLAYERS CHANGE THE CHOREOGRAPHY. THE BIT PLAYER THIS TIME IS HARRIET STONE.



PLAY IT COLO. PLAY IT HARD, RE-ENACT THAT FIRM, STIFF WALK. ONLY THE FAINT CHILL OF THE NIGHT AUTUMN AIR SUGGESTS THIS ISN'T THE SAME EPISODE STAGED THREE MONTHS BEFORE TO A WARM JULY EVENING.



THE TORN SOBBINGS, THE MASCARA BLEED TEARS HAVE BEEN MIRRORED ON OTHER YOUNG FACES. IT IS HARDLY NOTICEABLE THAT OTHER LINGS RIP OUT THESE SOBS, THAT NEW EYES SPILL THESE TEARS.



JUST FAINT TREMORS ABOUT THE FINGERS BETRAY ANY EMOTION TO THE ABRUPT TERMINATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP. A TYPICAL REACTION.

IT DOESN'T GET ANY MORE DIFFICULT, JUST THE FAMILIAR NAGGING DREAD OF THE PARTING SCENE. NO SWEET SORROW HERE, BABY!



"SONG OF A SAD-EYED SORCERESS"

THE LAST THOUGHT FADES TO NEW STIMULI. WINTERS SEES ONLY THE SWEEP OF HER BACK, THE GRACEFUL FALL OF HER HAIR, AND YET SOMETHING CATCHES IN HIS THROAT AND A STRANGE SCENT CATCHES AT HIS NOSTRILS.



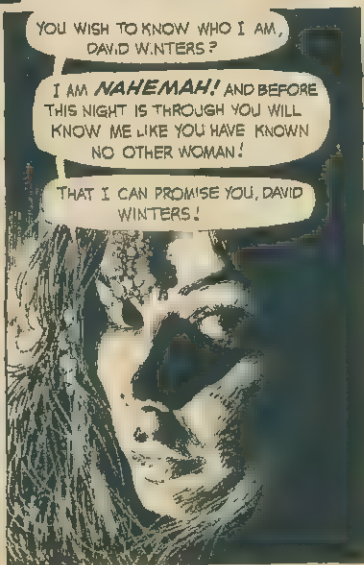
WHO..... WHO ARE YOU?



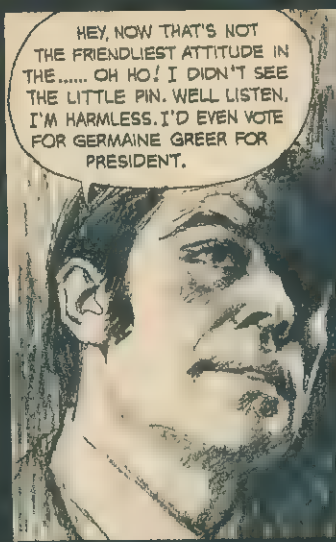
YOU WISH TO KNOW WHO I AM, DAVID WINTERS?

I AM **NAHEMAH!** AND BEFORE THIS NIGHT IS THROUGH YOU WILL KNOW ME LIKE YOU HAVE KNOWN NO OTHER WOMAN!

THAT I CAN PROMISE YOU, DAVID WINTERS!



HARRIET STONE HAD ONLY BEEN WORKING FOR KELLY AND LISSON, INC., FOR LITTLE OVER A WEEK WHEN DAVID WINTERS HAD FIRST WALKED INTO HER LIFE. DELIVERING ONE OF THOSE SMUG, ARTIFICIAL SMILES, SHE ASSUMED, THAT HE USUALLY DELIVERED IN EXECUTIVE SUITES AND SHE HAD BEEN ALSO AWARE THAT HE WAS NOT ONLY ON THE MAKE IN A BUSINESS SENSE, HIS ENTIRE LIFE STYLE WAS ONE CONTINUOUS "MAKE-IT" DRIVE.



THAT HAD BEEN HER FIRST ENCOUNTER WITH DAVID WINTERS. IN FACT, IT HAD BEEN HER FIRST ACTUAL ENCOUNTER WITH ANYBODY IN NEW YORK CITY SINCE HER ARRIVAL. SHE HAD LOOKED INTO THE DUSTY MIRROR EACH MORNING, ASSURING HERSELF THAT SHE HAD NO STARS IN HER EYES, THAT SHE WAS TOUGH AND SELF-RELIANT; BUT AS THE NIGHT CITY SOUNDS DRIFTED UP INTO HER TENEMENT ROOM THE RETURN LOOK WAS NOT AS FIRM. AND - DESPITE THE NEAR RELIGIOUS LECTURES SHE HAD PREACHED SILENTLY TO HERSELF - DAVID WINTERS BECAME THE FIRST RECOGNIZABLE FACE.

THE STING OF THE AUTUMN WIND SHARPENS ON HIS CHEEKS AS HE STEPS FORWARD. A DIM VOICE PLEADS WITH HIM NOT TO TAKE THE STEP, BUT HIS MOVEMENTS ARE NOT OF HIS OWN VOLITION.



I.... I HAVE SEEN YOU BEFORE.

YOU HAVE SEEN MY FACE MIRRORED IN OTHER FACES. I AM ALL THOSE FACES COMBINED, WITH THE SPECIFICS OF EACH.



I DON'T UNDERSTAND. YOU SAY YOUR NAME IS NAHEMAH.



AH, BUT HAVE YOU NEVER HEARD MY NAME BEFORE, DAVID?

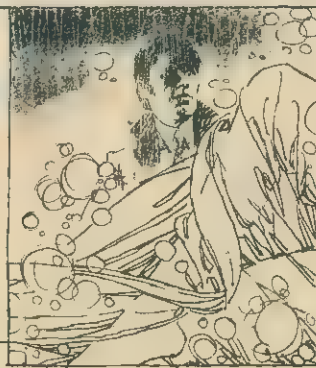


WAIT A MINUTE!!! I JUST DON'T GRAB THIS!! HOW DO YOU KNOW MY NAME?

BUT I KNOW ALL ABOUT YOU, DAVID, FOR I HAVE BEEN WITH YOU AT YOUR WEAKEST MOMENTS.



YOU HAVE MORE QUESTIONS. THEY BURN YOUR MIND. I SENSE THEM AND YOU WONDER HOW I SENSE THEM. YOU DESIRE TO TOUCH MY FLESH AND HAVE MY FLESH BURN YOU AS YOUR QUESTIONS DO. SO FOLLOW ME, DAVID WINTERS, FOLLOW ME, FOR THIS IS NO MORE THAN AN INNOCENT PARK WHERE LOVERS HAVE SPENT SPRING MOMENTS IN LOVELY POLITICS. POLITICS WHICH YOU THOUGHT YOU WERE A MASTER DEMAGOGUE OF... TILL NOW!!!



THE SAME DIM VOICE THROWS OUT THE WARNING AGAIN, BUT DAVID WINTERS KNOWS IT IS A LOST CAUSE, THAT HE WILL FOLLOW THE FLOWING APPARITION, THAT THE DECISION HAS BEEN DETERMINED IN A PART OF HIM THAT HE HAS NEVER VISITED BEFORE.

THE WEEKS HAD PASSED -- LONE, SOLITARY WEEKS SPLINTERED WITH BRIEF MOMENTS OF HUMAN CONTACT DURING OFFICE HOURS; AND HARRIET STONE HAD REALIZED THAT SHE HAD NEVER BEEN IN THE MIDST OF SO MANY PEOPLE, NOR HAD SHE EVER BEEN SO ALONE.

JUST DON'T GET ANY WEIRD IDEAS, DAVID.



BEYOND THAT, THESE CO-WORKERS OF HERS GOT ALL THE BREAKS AND BENEFITS WHICH ADDED TO HER LAMENT.

SHE HAD KNOWN DAVID WINTERS' GAME; SHE HAD KNOWN HE WAS TRYING TO SCORE ALL THROUGH THOSE UNCTUOUS MONOLOGUES THAT HE DELIVERED. YET, FINALLY, TO COMPENSATE FOR THE HOSTILITY AND ALONENESS, SHE YIELDED. ONE MEETING LEADING TO ANOTHER, BOTH OF THEM PLAYING THE USUAL MALE-FEMALE POLITICS....

WHO ME? WOULD I DO ANYTHING LIKE THAT?



.... UNTIL THAT NIGHT SHE HAD INVITED HIM TO HER APARTMENT.

QUITE A PAD YOU'VE GOT HERE. AND LISTEN, I'M SORRY ABOUT THE COME-ON THE PAST FEW WEEKS. GUESS IT'S THE PRESSURE, YOU KNOW?

CHANGE OF TACT, DAVID?



LISTEN, HARRIET, YOU'VE GOT THE MOST SUSPICIOUS MIND THAT...



YES. I THINK YOU WOULD. STAY HERE WHILE I FIX US A DRINK IN THE KITCHEN. HAVE A LOOK AROUND.

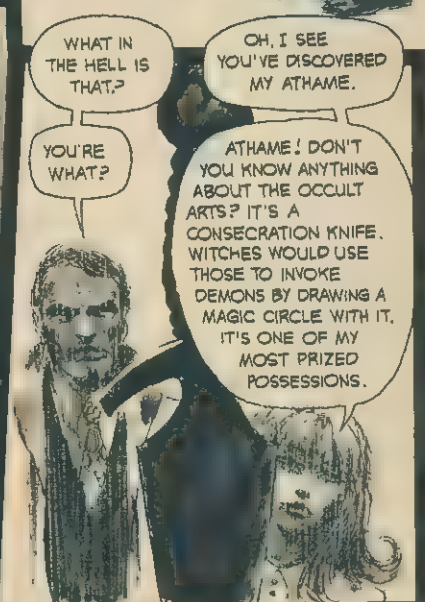


WHAT IN THE HELL IS THAT?

OH, I SEE YOU'VE DISCOVERED MY ATHAME.

YOU'RE WHAT?

ATHAME! DON'T YOU KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT THE OCCULT ARTS? IT'S A CONSECRATION KNIFE. WITCHES WOULD USE THOSE TO INVOKE DEMONS BY DRAWING A MAGIC CIRCLE WITH IT. IT'S ONE OF MY MOST PRIZED POSSESSIONS.



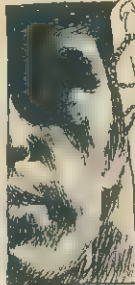
HARRIET STONE HAD LISTENED TO WINTERS' REPLY, STILL AWARE AS TO HIS NATURE. SHE HAD REMAINED STOIC, UNATTAINABLE THROUGH-OUT HIS SOPHISTICATED RAP, PLEASED THAT ANOTHER PERSON SHARED THE ROOM FOR THE MOMENT; AND SHE HAD ALSO BEEN AWARE THAT HER PASSION FOR THE OCCULT WAS A FACET OF HER WINTERS HAD NEVER SUSPECTED....

.... AND THROUGHOUT THAT EVENING HE COULD NEVER REALLY FORGET THE BLADE OF ATHAME RESTING UNDER THE FLOOR-LAMP.

TWO SECTIONS OF WINTER'S MIND BATTLE FOR DOMINANCE. ONE SECTION IS FILLED WITH THE FLEEING SPECTRE BEFORE HIM, BUT THE OTHER SECTION IS GRIPPING AT SOME THIN EDGE OF NORMALITY.

WHO IS THIS CREATURE WHO BECKONS AND SWAYS BEFORE HIM, ENTICING HIM ONWARD WITH EVERY FLUID MOVEMENT, EACH SUPPLE CURVE DEMANDING OBEDIENCE? IS HE FALLING PREY TO SOME PSYCHOTIC FEAR OF WOMEN THAT HE HAS HELD IN CHECK DURING HIS ENTIRE LIFE?

BUT THAT IS FOOLISHNESS. YET, IF IT IS FOOLISHNESS, THEN WHY CAN'T HE STOP HIS FEET FROM MOVING OUT ONTO THAT BRIDGE? WHY IS THE DESIRE TO POSSESS BURNING SO FERVENTLY IN HIS VEINS? AND NAHEMAH, SHE IS LIKE SOME SYMBOLIC LIFE-FORM WHOSE CREATION AND PURPOSE HAS BEEN LOST IN THE PASSAGE OF TIME. WHY IS THAT?

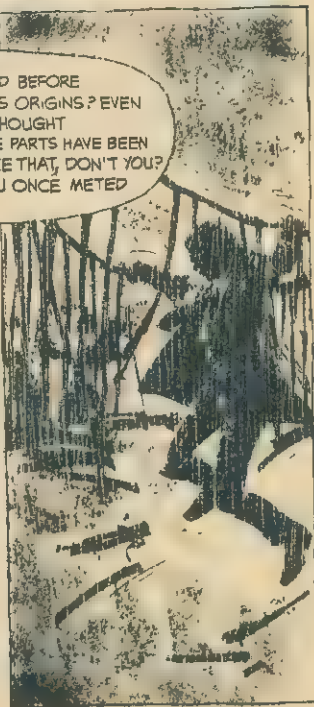
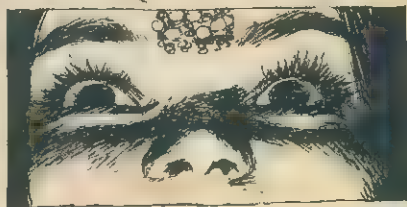


FOLLOW ME, DAVID WINTERS, FOR OUR MEETING IS PREORDAINED.

I SENSE THE FEAR THAT CUTS YOUR HEART! IT MINGLES WITH YOUR DESIRE FOR ME! BUT FIRST YOU MUST COME TO ME.

CROSS THE BRIDGE, MY SWEET, AND THEN YOU CAN HAVE ME. JUST A FEW SHORT STEPS! IGNORE THE DISTANT SOUND OF THE RUSHING WATER FAR BELOW.

HAS THIS SCENE PLAYED BEFORE DAVID? DO YOU PERCEIVE ITS ORIGINS? EVEN THROUGH YOUR FEAR, THE THOUGHT TANTALYZES YOU! BUT THE PARTS HAVE BEEN SWITCHED, YOU DO REALIZE THAT, DON'T YOU? YOU PLAY THE ROLE YOU ONCE METED OUT!



HARRIET STONE HAD PLAYED THE GAME, FOLLOWING THE PRESCRIBED FORMULA, INCLUDING ALL THE TENTATIVE MOVES AND DOUBLE ENTENDRES.



SHE HAD PLAYED THE GAME AND PLAYED IT WELL, TRYING TO REMAIN AWARE OF THE FACT THAT THAT WAS ALL IT WAS: A GAME.



IT HAD BEEN THE COMMON NEED, THE ONE TRAIT THAT LINKED THEM, WHICH HAD FINALLY COMPLETED THE CHARADE.



SHE HAD HEARD HERSELF UTTERING WORDS THAT WERE SCHOOL-GIRL TEXT, WORDS SHE HAD KNOWN BETTY FRIEDMAN WOULD M FROWN UPON; AND SHE FELT ALTERNATE SENSATIONS — A MINGLING OF NEED WITH A FEELING OF FAILURE.

HONEY, YOU'RE REALLY FINE, YOU KNOW THAT?

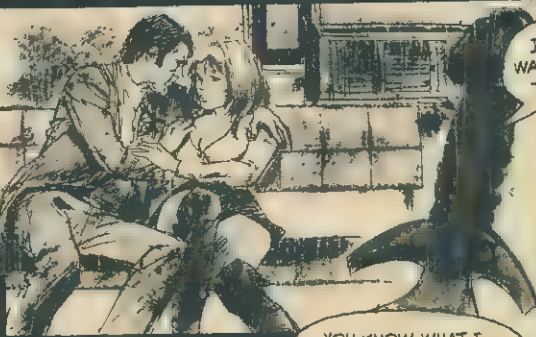


DAVID, I'M..... I'M NOT SO SURE!

THE SOFT, MELLOW SOUNDS OF FRANK SINATRA CROONING *LOST LOVE* IN THE BACKGROUND HAD ADDED THE FINAL TOUCH TO THE SCENE. SHE HAD WONDERED HOW MANY SUCH SCENES HAD BEEN PRESIDED OVER, VOCALLY, BY THE KING.

LISTEN, WE BOTH NEED IT, RIGHT? YOU KNOW YOU REALLY WANT THIS.

AND SHE HAD STILL KNOWN THAT IT WAS ONLY A GAME, BUT THERE WAS ONE SLIGHT CHANGE: SHE HAD BEEN WISHING THAT PART OF IT COULD BE... REAL



I JUST DON'T WANT TO BE HURT, THAT'S ALL.

YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN DAVID. I JUST WANT SOME PART OF ME LEFT, SOME PART OF ME THAT'S MINE ALONE.

NO ONE'S GOIN' TO HURT YOU, HONEY. THAT'S NO JIVE.

RIGHT NOW, I WANT YOU, BABY!



THE WIND LIFTS, CARRYING NAHEMAH'S CARRESSING VOICE TO HIM, THE WORDS A CHANTING MOCKERY AS THE GAPING CHASM BELOW GRIPS AT THE CENTER OF WINTER'S STOMACH

HOW MANY SONGS HAVE YOU LISTENED TO, YET NEVER HEARD THE LYRICS?

YET, THERE IS A POWER GREATER THAN THAT OF THE YAWNING ABYSS; AND IT IS MIRRORED IN NAHEMAH'S EYES, A KINDLING SPARK THAT DISRUPTS THE NIGHT AIR AND SEARS HIS FLESH. SOME BASIC PART OF HIM FIGHTS TO RETAIN HIS IDENTITY.

WHAT WHISPERED HOPES ENFLAMED ON YOUR COVENANT WASHED TO DYING EMBERS?

WHAT THE HELL IS THIS?.....SERMONETTES?

THAT'S ONE DAMNED THING I DON'T NEED, SISTER! YOU BROADS ARE ALL ALIKE!

BUT YOU..... YOU'RE THE FREAKIEST WITCH I'VE EVER SEEN!

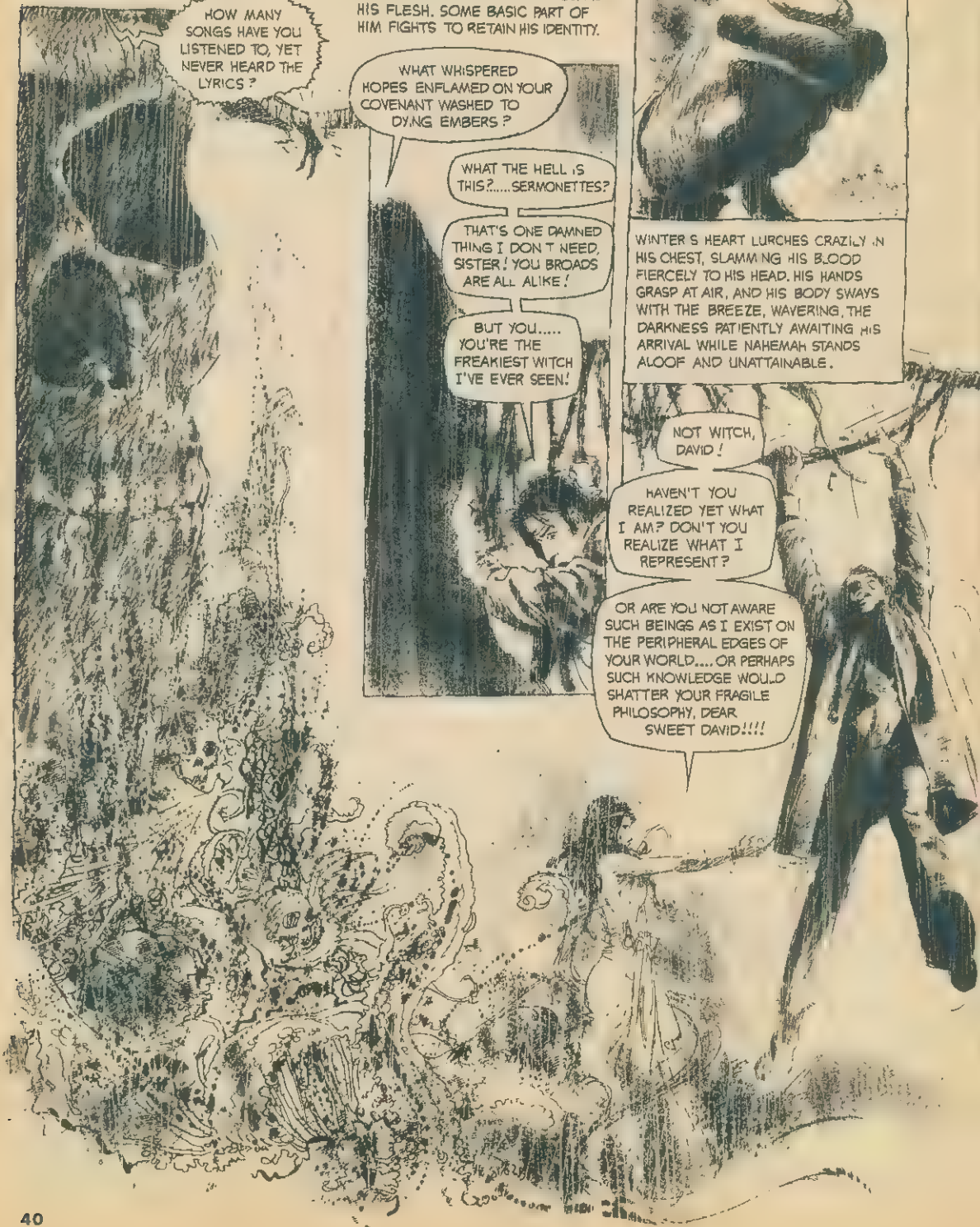
NOT WITCH, DAVID!

HAVEN'T YOU REALIZED YET WHAT I AM? DON'T YOU REALIZE WHAT I REPRESENT?

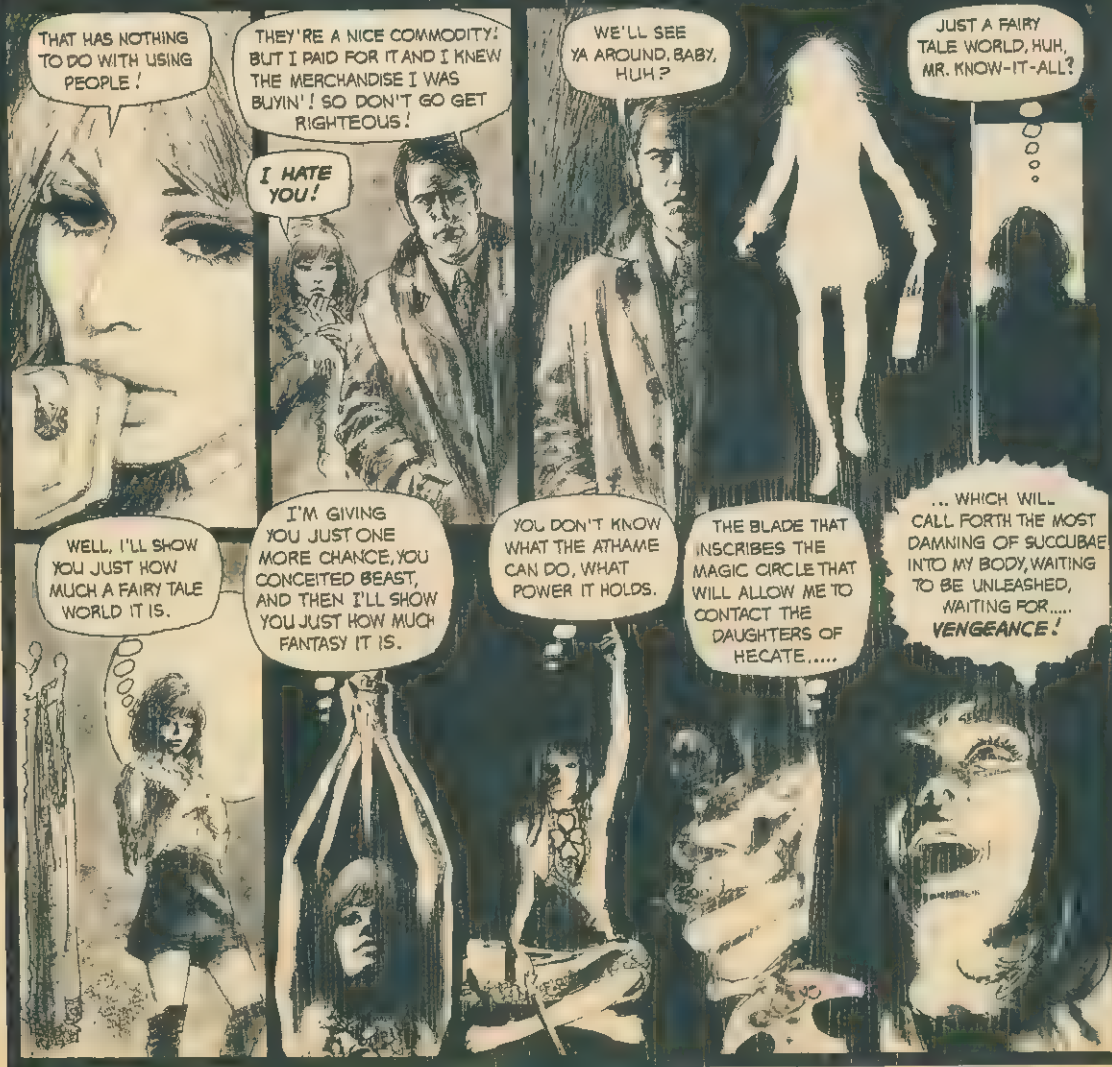
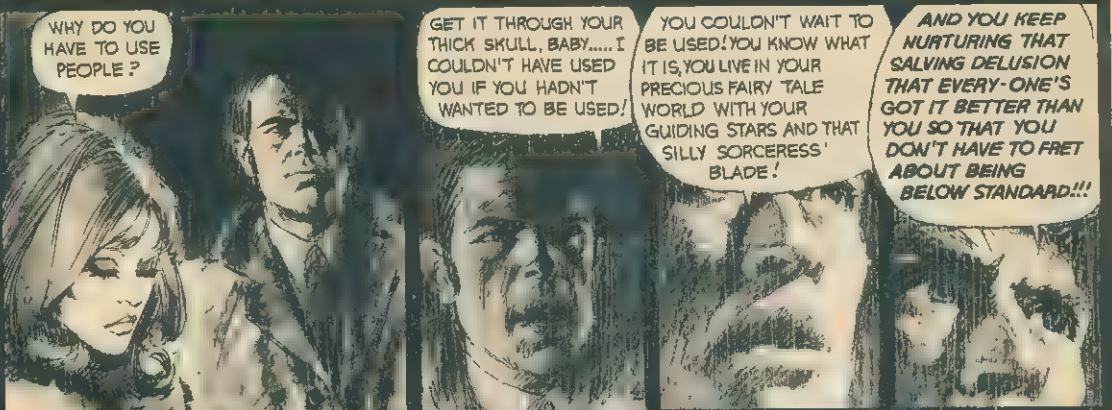
OR ARE YOU NOT AWARE SUCH BEINGS AS I EXIST ON THE PERIPHERAL EDGES OF YOUR WORLD.... OR PERHAPS SUCH KNOWLEDGE WOULD SHATTER YOUR FRAGILE PHILOSOPHY, DEAR SWEET DAVID!!!!



WINTER'S HEART LURCHES CRAZILY IN HIS CHEST, SLAMMING HIS BLOOD FIERCELY TO HIS HEAD. HIS HANDS GRASP AT AIR, AND HIS BODY SWAYS WITH THE BREEZE, WAVERING, THE DARKNESS PATIENTLY AWAITING HIS ARRIVAL WHILE NAHEMAH STANDS ALOOF AND UNATTAINABLE.



HARRIET HAD SEEN THE MECHANISMS AT WORK. SHE HAD KNOWN WHAT FUNCTIONS EACH MOVEMENT WINTERS SUPPLIED MEANT. YET, SHE HAD IGNORED THEM, DESIRING INSTEAD A TIME OF RELIANCE TO SELF-RELIANCE. SHE DESERVED THAT MUCH, SHE HAD SOOTHED HERSELF, AWARE THERE WOULD COME A TIME WHEN SHE WOULD HAVE TO PAY FOR THAT CONVENIENCE.



WINTERS HOVERS AT THE BRINK WITH DEATH AND LIFE WAITING ON THE SIDES. HE HAS NEVER BEEN THIS CLOSE TO DEATH BEFORE AND YET THERE IS STILL A CURIOUS SENSATION THAT IT IS HAPPENING TO SOMEONE ELSE.



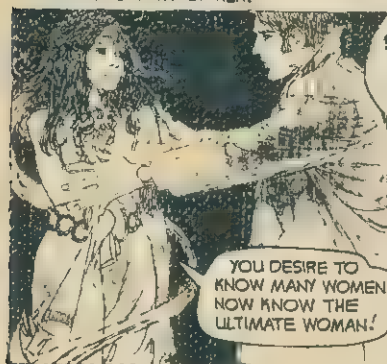
A TENTATIVE STEP THE FEAR STILL CLUTCHING AT HIS INSIDES, AND HIS BALANCE IS RESTORED.



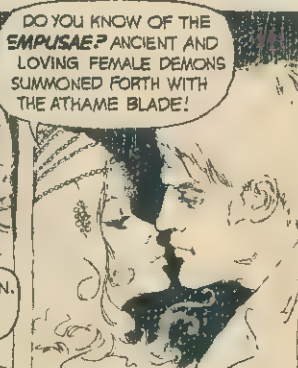
THE TERROR SUBSIDES IN HIS BREAST AS HE CONTINUES ACROSS THE TERMITE AND WEATHER-EATEN BRIDGE.



NAHEMAH'S UNEARTHLY BEAUTY RESUMES ITS HOLD. HE HAS NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE HER BEFORE, YET AT THE SAME TIME HE HAS KNOWN SEPARATE PARTS OF HER.



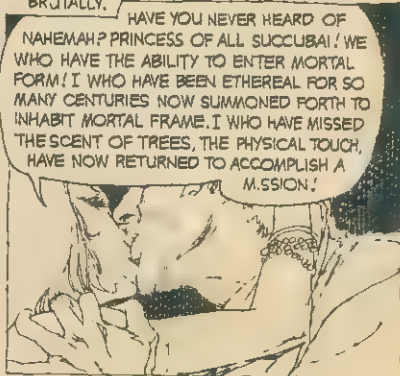
HER BREATH IS WARM AND EXOTIC. HER SCENT FILLS HIS NOSTRILS, HER TOUCH IS ELECTRIC, AND THESE ARE EMOTIONS HE CANNOT COMPREHEND.



DO YOU KNOW OF THE **EMPUSAE**? ANCIENT AND LOVING FEMALE DEMONS SUMMONED FORTH WITH THE ATHAME BLADE!

YOU DESIRE TO KNOW MANY WOMEN. NOW KNOW THE ULTIMATE WOMAN!

HE WANTS TO RUN; HE WANTS TO CONQUER HER. FOR ONE FIERCE MOMENT, AS HE GRIPS THE UNEARTHLY BEAUTY TO HIM HE REGAINS HIS FORMER CONFIDENCE AND CLUTCHES HER BRUTALLY.



HAVE YOU NEVER HEARD OF NAHEMAH? PRINCESS OF ALL SUCCUBAI! WE WHO HAVE THE ABILITY TO ENTER MORTAL FORM! I WHO HAVE BEEN ETHEREAL FOR SO MANY CENTURIES NOW SUMMONED FORTH TO INHABIT MORTAL FRAME. I WHO HAVE MISSED THE SCENT OF TREES, THE PHYSICAL TOUCH, HAVE NOW RETURNED TO ACCOMPLISH A MISSION!

HIS COMMAND IS SHORT-LIVED, FOLLOWED WITH A LAUGHTER THAT WHIPS ON THE COLD NIGHT WIND AND TEARS AT HIS EARS.



WITH THE POWER TO TURN YOUR LUST.....

SATIN FLESH TURN TO SCALEY COILS BENEATH HIS FINGERS. SOFT WARMTH BLENDS TO SERPENTINE CHILL.



..... TO REVULSION!!!!

THE CHANGE SHREDS WINTER'S SANITY, HIS ENTIRE BEING RIPPED OPEN AND EXPOSED WITH A MIND THAT SEEKS DESPERATELY TO COMPREHEND WHAT CANNOT BE COMPREHENDED.



OH, SACRED DAUGHTER
OF HEKATE, PRINCESS OF
THE SUCCUBAI....



COME FORTH INTO
THIS WORLD OF
PLASTIC...



COME FORTH INTO THIS
WORLD OF OVER-POPULATION
WHERE LONELINESS AND
ALIENATION ARE DEEPER
THAN EVER.



AND FEEL THE
HURT OF YOUR FLESH AND
BLOOD SISTERS AS YOU
ENTER MY BEING, FEEL THAT
HURT AND SEEK
JUSTIFICATION.



I AM
HERE, HARRIET
STONE.



I CAN SENSE
IT. MY MIND IS
ONE WITH YOURS.
THEY MINGLE.

YOU MUST RELAX
AND LET ME TAKE
POSSESSION. ALL READY
I BEGIN TO REALIZE THE
SENSATIONS I HAVE
MISSED SO MANY YEARS.
THROUGH YOUR FINGERS
I NOW HAVE TOUCH.
BUT SOON IT WILL BE
MY TOUCH.



NOT YET. HE
MUST HAVE ONE
MORE CHANCE. IF HE
DOES NOT RELENT,
THEN I WILL LET YOU
TAKE FULL POSSESSION.
BUT YOU WILL NOT
LIKE THIS WORLD.

YOU SAY IT IS IMPERSONAL.
BUT THERE ARE SO MANY
OF YOU



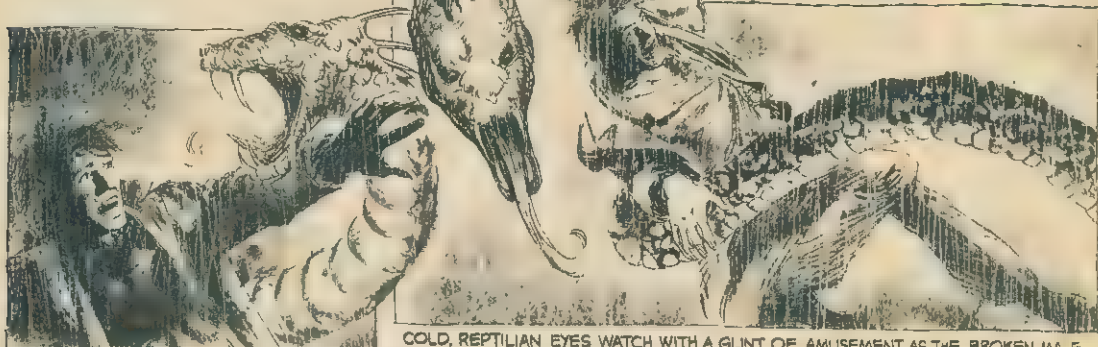
YES, BUT IT IS
THAT WAY. AND CRUEL.
I SOMETIMES WONDER
HOW ANYONE CAN
WANT TO LIVE IN THIS
JUNGLE, THIS SOOT
AND GRIME.

BUT NOW YOU
ARE WITHIN ME, SISTER,
AND I FEEL A ONENESS
WITH YOU!



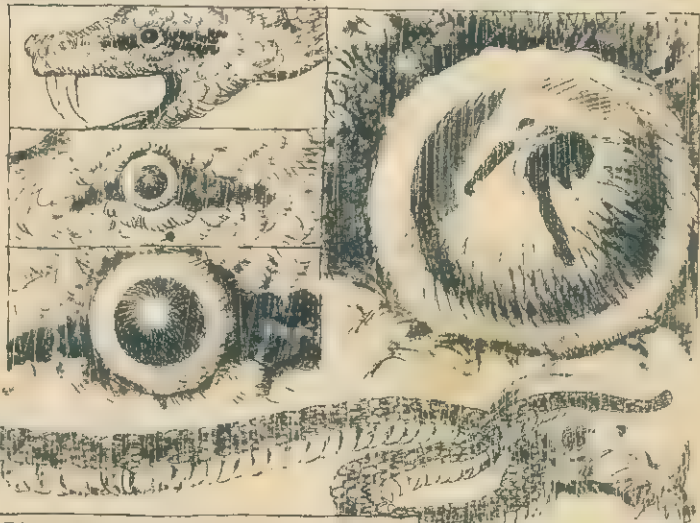
NAHEMAM EXULTS IN THE PANIC SHE CAUSES. SIBILANT HISSES SPLIT THE AIR IN SERPENTINE LAUGHTER.

SHE IS ALIVE ONCE MORE. EVEN THE
ESSENCE OF FOULED AIR TINGLES AT
HER NOSTRILS... AND HE KNOWS
A FEAR BORN OF THE
ANCIENTS!



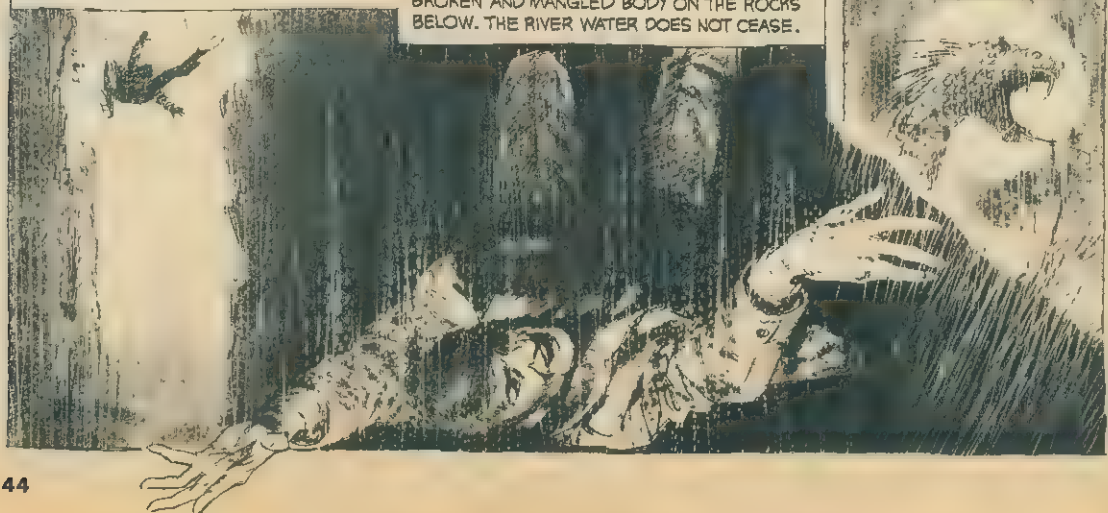
COLD, REPTILIAN EYES WATCH WITH A GLINT OF AMUSEMENT AS THE BROKEN MALE
FIGURE HURTTLES AWAY CARELESSLY...

AND THEN SHE RELEASES HIM, BONES
SNAPPED ALONG WITH SPIRIT.




AND FALLS OVER THE EDGE OF EARTH,
COLLIDING HARD AGAINST THE GROUND AND
THEN FALLING OUTWARD, SPINNING, INTO
THE RUSH OF AIR, HURTLING TOWARD HIS
DEATH.

THE MALE HUMAN'S SCREAMS FADE QUICKLY.
THE ONLY TESTIMONY TO THE EVENTS IS THE
BROKEN AND MANGLED BODY ON THE ROCKS
BELOW. THE RIVER WATER DOES NOT CEASE.







IT WAS ALL
SO HORRIBLE.....



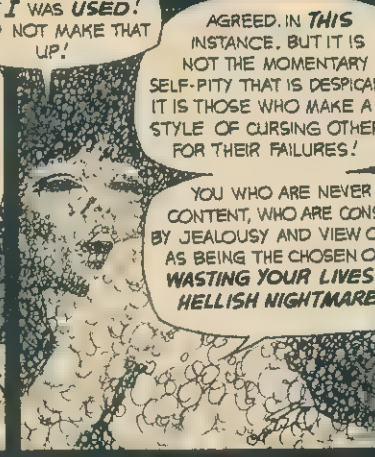
I SHOULDN'T HAVE
DONE IT, NAHEMAH!
WHY DID YOU LET ME
DO IT?



YOU ALWAYS COMPLAIN,
HARRIET STONE! YOU BASK
IN YOUR SELF-MADE
REALITY OF MISERY AND
SELF-PITY!

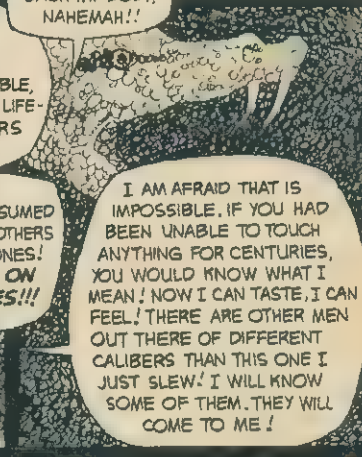


SELF-PITY! NO!
YOU'RE WRONG!
I WAS JUSTIFIED!



BUT I WAS *USED*!
I DID NOT MAKE THAT
UP!

AGREED, IN *THIS*
INSTANCE. BUT IT IS
NOT THE MOMENTARY
SELF-PITY THAT IS DESPICABLE,
IT IS THOSE WHO MAKE A LIFE-
STYLE OF CURSING OTHERS
FOR THEIR FAILURES!

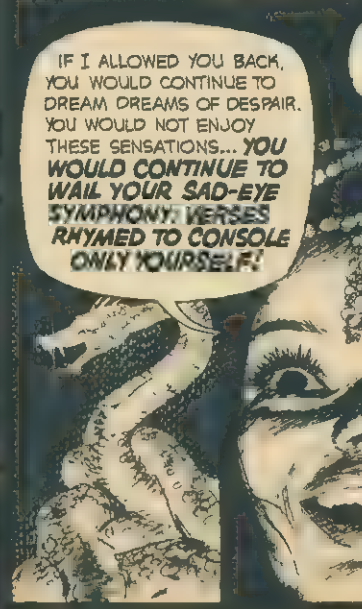


GIVE ME
BACK MY BODY,
NAHEMAH!!


MANY OF YOUR
RACE JUSTIFY THEIR
UNSPOKEN, NEARLY
UNALTERABLE RULE:
THAT THEY ARE
DETERMINED TO SEEK
THEIR OWN BRAND
OF HELL!

YOU WHO ARE NEVER
CONTENT, WHO ARE CONSUMED
BY JEALOUSY AND VIEW OTHERS
AS BEING THE CHOSEN ONES!
**WASTING YOUR LIVES ON
HELLISH NIGHTMARES!!!**

I AM AFRAID THAT IS
IMPOSSIBLE. IF YOU HAD
BEEN UNABLE TO TOUCH
ANYTHING FOR CENTURIES,
YOU WOULD KNOW WHAT I
MEAN! NOW I CAN TASTE, I CAN
FEEL! THERE ARE OTHER MEN
OUT THERE OF DIFFERENT
CALIBERS THAN THIS ONE I
JUST SLEW! I WILL KNOW
SOME OF THEM. THEY WILL
COME TO ME!




IF I ALLOWED YOU BACK,
YOU WOULD CONTINUE TO
DREAM DREAMS OF DESPAIR.
YOU WOULD NOT ENJOY
THESE SENSATIONS... **YOU
WOULD CONTINUE TO
WAIL YOUR SAD-EYE
SYMPHONY. VERSES
RHYMED TO CONSOLE
ONLY YOURSELF!**



BUT BELIEVE ME
HARRIET, I SHALL ENJOY
EACH PERCEPTION.

I REALLY
SHALL!!!



JUST A LITTLE LESSON
TAKEN OUT OF THE ARCHIVES,
FIEND READERS, SO
REMEMBER, THE NEXT TIME
YOU'RE OUT ON THE STREETS
SEEKING TO USE SOMEONE,
IT JUST MIGHT BE SOMEONE
THAT WILL USE YOU! SWEET
FANTASIES!!!

BUT RALPH,
WHY DIDN'T YOU
CHECK THE GAS
GAUGE **BEFORE**
WE LEFT...?

SHUDDUP, JEAN! I'VE HAD
ENOUGH OF YOUR BELLY-
ACHING TO LAST ME THE
NEXT TWENTY YEARS!

THE ROAD WAS DARK, AND DESOLATE. NO CARBON-
COPY GAS STATIONS-- WITH THEIR FAMILIAR PINBALL --
MACHINE-LIKE FLASHING LIGHTS-- INTERRUPTED ITS
BLEAK LENGTH...

YOU DON'T HAVE TO
GET SO **NASTY** ABOUT
IT-- I'M FRIGHTENED
ENOUGH AS IT IS... OUT
HERE IN THE MIDDLE
OF NOWHERE... IN
THE DARK...

LOOK, I'M
TELLING YOU FOR
THE **LAST TIME**--
IF YOU DON'T SHUT UP,
I'LL **SHUT** YOU UP!

READY FOR SOME DIRE DOLLOPS OF
DIABOLICAL DASTARDLINESS, CONNOISSEURS?
LET'S JOIN RALPH AND JEAN AS THEY
INEXTRICABLY ENMESH THEMSELVES IN
A LITTLE DRAMA CALLED...

WON'T GET FOOLED AGAIN

ISOLATED, BROODING, DECREPIT,
THE ANCIENT MANSION STOOD
TENUOUSLY--YET DEFIANTLY--
ON ITS TERMITE-INFESTED
FOUNDATIONS. ITS GABLED
ROOF SEEMED TO SAG WITH
THE WEIGHT OF A CENTURY--
ITS WALLS WERE WEARY WITH
DURESS. ITS FACADE OF
RESPECTABILITY WAS
TARNISHED WITH THE TRUTH
OF TIME, AND ITS APPEARANCE
SPOKE OF IMPENDING
RUINATION...

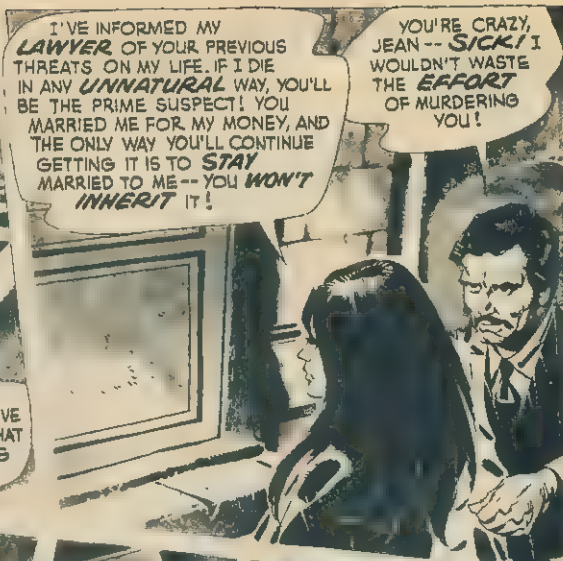
RALPH, YOU'RE **NOT**
THINKING OF STAYING
IN **THIS** CREEPY
PLACE...? I MEAN, I
JUST **COULDN'T**...

YOU'RE JUST NOT
GOING TO **QUIT**, ARE
YOU? YOU'RE GOING TO
KEEP RIGHT ON HARPING
AWAY UNTIL YOUR TONGUE
FALLS OUT! I SWEAR,
SOMETIMES I COULD...



KILL ME? GO AHEAD, RALPH, SAY IT AGAIN! YOU'VE THREATENED ME IN THE PAST--ANOTHER TIME WON'T HURT. BUT I'VE FIXED YOU...

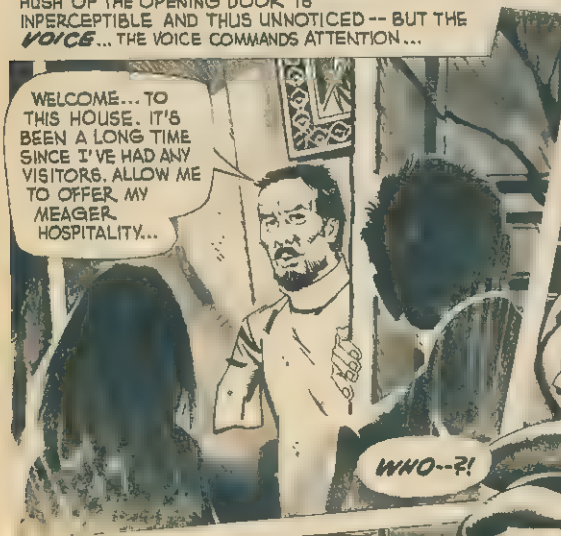
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, YOU'VE FIXED ME? WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?



I'VE INFORMED MY LAWYER OF YOUR PREVIOUS THREATS ON MY LIFE. IF I DIE IN ANY UNNATURAL WAY, YOU'LL BE THE PRIME SUSPECT! YOU MARRIED ME FOR MY MONEY, AND THE ONLY WAY YOU'LL CONTINUE GETTING IT IS TO STAY MARRIED TO ME--YOU WON'T INHERIT IT!

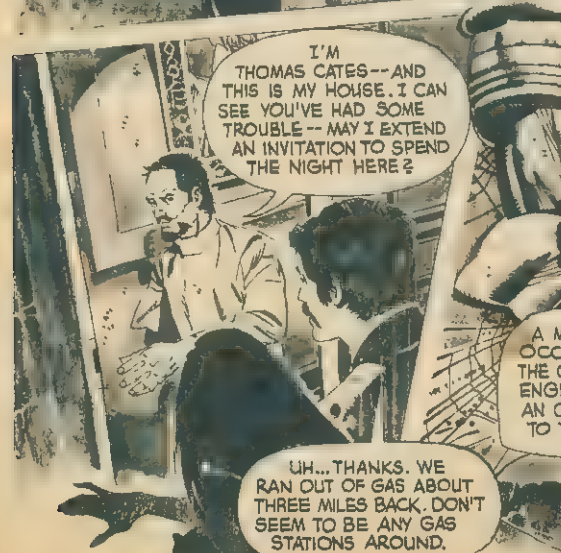
YOU'RE CRAZY, JEAN--SICK! I WOULDN'T WASTE THE EFFORT OF MURDERING YOU!

THE WHISPERING HUSH OF THE OPENING DOOR IS IMPERCEPTIBLE AND THUS UNNOTICED--BUT THE VOICE... THE VOICE COMMANDS ATTENTION...



WELCOME... TO THIS HOUSE. IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME SINCE I'VE HAD ANY VISITORS. ALLOW ME TO OFFER MY MEAGER HOSPITALITY...

WHO--?!



I'M THOMAS CATES--AND THIS IS MY HOUSE. I CAN SEE YOU'VE HAD SOME TROUBLE--MAY I EXTEND AN INVITATION TO SPEND THE NIGHT HERE?

UH... THANKS. WE RAN OUT OF GAS ABOUT THREE MILES BACK. DON'T SEEM TO BE ANY GAS STATIONS AROUND.



A MOST UNFORTUNATE OCCURRENCE. BUT, LIKE THE CUSTOMS OF OLD ENGLAND, MY HOUSE IS AN OPEN SANCTUARY TO THOSE IN NEED.

THAT'S VERY... GRACIOUS OF YOU, MR. CATES. WE GREATLY APPRECIATE IT.



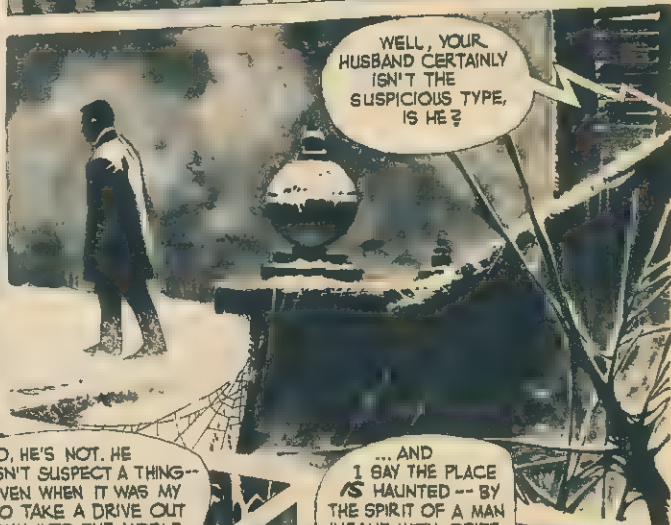
FORGIVE ME FOR STARING, BUT YOU LOOK VERY *MUCH* LIKE SOMEONE I ONCE KNEW-- SOMEONE EXCEEDINGLY *BEAUTIFUL*...

EXCUSE ME, MR. CATES, BUT I'M THIRSTY. HAVE YOU GOT A *DRINK*...?

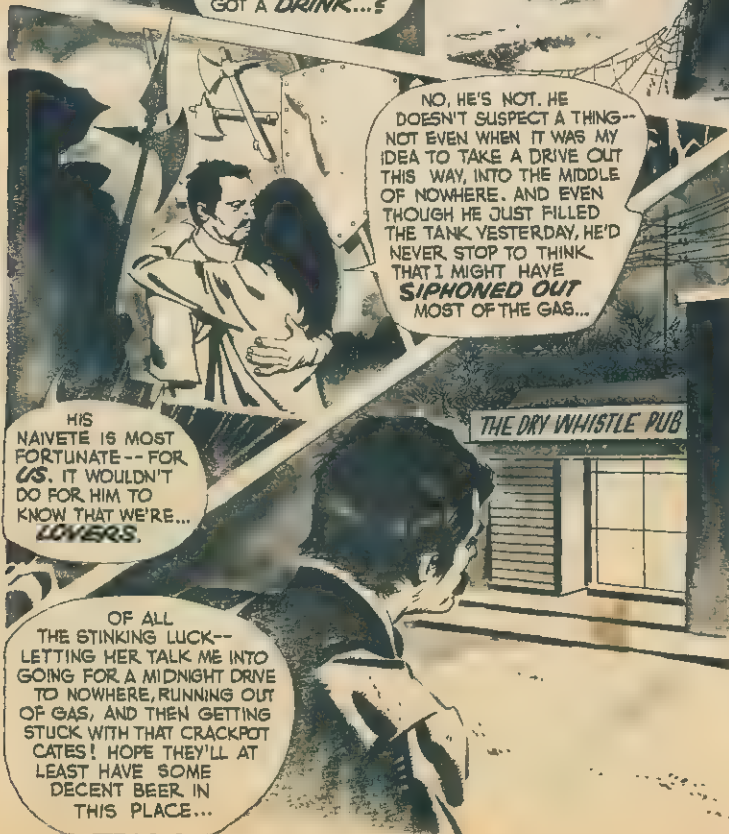


I'M AFRAID I DON'T KEEP LIQUOR IN THE HOUSE. BUT THERE IS A PUB ABOUT A MILE DOWN THE ROAD-- *THE DRY WHISTLE*.

THANKS. I THINK I'LL TAKE A WALK DOWN THERE. DON'T WAIT UP FOR ME.



WELL, YOUR HUSBAND CERTAINLY ISN'T THE SUSPICIOUS TYPE, IS HE?



NO, HE'S NOT. HE DOESN'T SUSPECT A THING-- NOT EVEN WHEN IT WAS MY IDEA TO TAKE A DRIVE OUT THIS WAY, INTO THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE. AND EVEN THOUGH HE JUST FILLED THE TANK YESTERDAY, HE'D NEVER STOP TO THINK THAT I MIGHT HAVE *SIPHONED OUT* MOST OF THE GAS...

HIS NAIVETE IS MOST FORTUNATE-- FOR *US*. IT WOULDN'T DO FOR HIM TO KNOW THAT WE'RE... *LOVERS*.

OF ALL THE STINKING LUCK-- LETTING HER TALK ME INTO GOING FOR A MIDNIGHT DRIVE TO NOWHERE, RUNNING OUT OF GAS, AND THEN GETTING STUCK WITH THAT CRACKPOT CATES! HOPE THEY'LL AT LEAST HAVE SOME DECENT BEER IN THIS PLACE...

...AND I SAY THE PLACE IS HAUNTED -- BY THE SPIRIT OF A MAN INSANE WITH GRIEF AND DISILLUSION, AND COMPELLED WITH THE BURNING DESIRE FOR VENGEANCE!

AH, GO ON! YOU'VE BEEN SAMPLING TOO MUCH OF YOUR OWN BREW!



YOU KNOW WHAT
HAPPENED AS WELL AS
I DO! IT STARTED A
CENTURY AGO AND
IT WON'T **END** UNTIL
THE GHOST'S
REVENGE IS
EXACTED...

'HE WAS ALWAYS UNSURE OF HIMSELF--NEVER BELIEVED
HIS WIFE WANTED ANYTHING BUT...'

MONEY!
THAT'S THE ONLY
REASON YOU MARRIED
ME-- FOR MY **MONEY!**
BUT I'M WELL AWARE
OF YOUR REASONS,
YOUR DESIRES--
**AND YOUR
SCHEMES!**

WHAT ARE
YOU TALKING ABOUT?
YOU'RE **MAD**... I
DON'T KNOW WHY I
EVER **MARRIED**
YOU!

'HE HAD A VOLATILE TEMPER--AND EXERCISED IT RELIGIOUSLY.
PERHAPS HE FELT INFERIOR OR INCOMPETENT FOR SOME
UNKNOWN REASON...'

SO YOU **ADMIT**
YOU NEVER LOVED ME!
I **KNEW** IT! AND I KNOW
YOU'VE GOT LOVERS
HIDING IN EVERY NOOK
AND CRANNY OF THIS
HOUSE! I ALSO KNOW
THAT YOU PLAN TO
MURDER ME-- SO
YOU AND YOUR LOVERS
CAN ENJOY MY WEALTH
IN **TOTAL**
FREEDOM!

NO! NO, YOU'RE
WRONG! YOU'RE
INSANELY SUSPICIOUS--
AND THERE'S ABSOLUTELY
NO **CAUSE** FOR IT!

'HIS UNFOUNDED JEALOUSY DROVE HIM TO ELABORATE
PRECAUTIONS. HE HAD HIS WIFE'S ROOM GUARDED AT
ALL TIMES-- BUT ONLY BY EUNUCHS. HE DESTROYED
HIS WILL WHICH HAD PROVIDED FOR THE
BEQUEATHMENT OF HIS ENTIRE FORTUNE TO HIS
WIFE...'

YEAH-- WE **ALL** KNOW THAT,
AND **MORE!** BUT IT DOESN'T
PROVE THE EXISTENCE OF
ANY **GHOST!**

WEIRD
COINCIDENCE--
THIS MAN IN THE
BARTENDER'S
STORY SOUNDS
JUST LIKE JEAN--
AFRAID THAT ALL
I MARRIED HER
FOR WAS HER
MONEY...

MAYBE IT **DOESN'T**
MEAN THERE'S A GHOST.
BUT DO YOU
REMEMBER HOW...

'...HIS WIFE WAS DRIVEN TO THE BRINK OF
INSANITY BY HIS UNFOUNDED ACCUSATIONS?
HOW SHE BECAME DISTRAUGHT, **ESTRANGED**--
UNTIL FINALLY SHE TOOK ONE OF HIS AXES
FROM THE DISPLAY ON THE HOUSE'S WALL...?'

!...AND HOW SHE STEALTHILY CREEPT DOWN THE DARKENED CORRIDORS, FIERCELY GRIPPING THAT AXE, TO HER SLEEPING HUSBAND'S BEDROOM...?



!...HOW SHE INTENDED TO **BEHEAD** HIM-- NOT FOR HIS MONEY, BUT BECAUSE HE HAD DRIVEN HER **INSANE**...?

I CAN'T **STAND** IT ANY LONGER! I CAN'T **LIVE** UNDER A **LOCK AND KEY**!



GOOD LORD! NO!

!...AND HOW SHE DESCENDED INTO A FRENZY OF BERSERK BLOODLUST, BUT **FAILED** TO DECAPITATE HIM-- CUTTING OFF HIS **ARM** INSTEAD...?



!...AND LEFT HIM IN HIS BED TO SLOWLY DIE IN AGONY, THE BLOOD PUMPING IN CRIMSON GOUTS FROM THE SEVERED STUMP OF HIS ARM...?

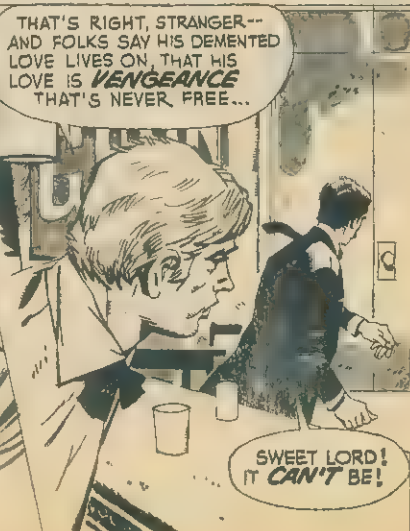


AND NOW--A CENTURY LATER--**LIGHTS** HAVE BEEN SEEN IN THE HOUSE. PEOPLE SAY THE GHOST OF THOMAS CATES HAS RETURNED TO HIS RUN-DOWN MANSION--TO WREAK HORRIBLE VENGEANCE UPON HIS WIFE!



PEOPLE WHO SEE LIGHTS IN THE CATES HOUSE ARE SEEING THE EFFECTS OF TOO MUCH LIQUOR IN **YOUR** PUB! BESIDES, CATES' WIFE HAS BEEN DEAD FOR EIGHTY YEARS!

THAT'S RIGHT, STRANGER-- AND FOLKS SAY HIS DEMENTED LOVE LIVES ON, THAT HIS LOVE IS **VENGEANCE** THAT'S NEVER FREE...



THE MAN'S NAME WAS... **CATES**? AND HIS **ARM** WAS CUT OFF...?

SWEET LORD! IT CAN'T BE!



YOU'RE UNDER **ARREST!**
YOU'LL GET THE **CHAIR**
FOR **THIS!**

COME ALONG
NOW-- YOU'LL BE
ALLOWED ONE PHONE
CALL TO YOUR **LAWYER**
WHEN WE GET TO THE
STATION...



PROVIDING I MADE
FREQUENT VISITS TO HIM OUT
HERE IN THIS LOATHSOME HOUSE.
SOMETIMES I WONDERED IF
IT WAS **WORTH** IT...



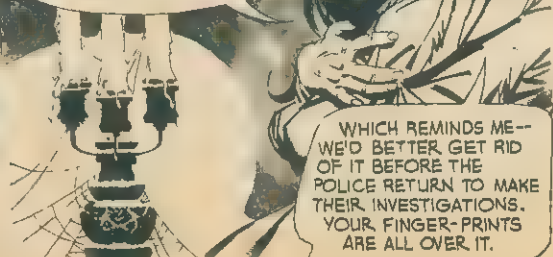
WELL, YOU'LL NEVER HAVE TO DO IT
AGAIN NOW THAT CATES HAS BEEN CUT UP
INTO LITTLE PIECES! NICE THAT HE SHOULD
BE CRAZY ENOUGH TO MAKE OUT HIS WILL
WITH **YOU** AS **BENEFICIARY**...



FINALLY! THOUGHT
I'D SUPPlicate IN THIS
BLOODY SUIT-OF-ARMOR!
BUT IT WAS **WORTH** IT--
THE PLAN WENT LIKE
CLOCKWORK! YOUR CALL
TO THE POLICE WAS
TIMED **PERFECTLY**.

RIGHT. AND SINCE RALPH
WAS THOUGHTFUL ENOUGH TO
KILL CATES, I CAN COLLECT THE
INHERITANCE-- AND RALPH'LL BE PUT
AWAY FOREVER. LIKE **THREE** BIRDS
WITH ONE AXE-- GETTING RID OF BOTH
CATES **AND** RALPH, AND COLLECTING
A NICE FORTUNE ON THE SIDE! LUCKY
CATES WAS SUCH A SOUND SLEEPER--
IT WASN'T EASY PLANTING THAT
BLOODY AXE ON THE BED
NEXT TO HIM...

YEAH, GOOD THING YOUR
HUSBAND'S SUCH A BOOZER--
IT WAS A GAMBLE HOPING HE'D
COME TO THE PUB. HE FELL FOR
THE **GHOST** STORY LIKE A TON
OF BRICKS! 'COURSE, HOW WAS
HE TO KNOW YOU NEVER REALLY
HAD ANY MONEY-- THAT A SCREWY
ECCENTRIC LIKE CATES KEPT
YOU SUPPLIED WITH ALL THE
DOUGH YOU **WANTED?**



WHICH REMINDS ME--
WE'D BETTER GET RID
OF IT BEFORE THE
POLICE RETURN TO MAKE
THEIR INVESTIGATIONS.
YOUR FINGER-PRINTS
ARE ALL OVER IT.

ESPECIALLY AFTER CATES CAME TO THIS HOUSE. HE'S SUPPOSED TO LOOK **EXACTLY** LIKE THE ORIGINAL CATES--AND THE FACT THAT THE CATES LINE WAS SUPPOSED TO HAVE DIED WITH HIM ADDED MORE FIRE TO THE LEGEND, OF COURSE. THERE WEREN'T SUPPOSED TO BE **ANY** SURVIVING RELATIVES.

I STILL CAN'T BELIEVE IT ALL WORKED--IT WAS SUCH A **COMPLICATED** SET-UP. YOU SHOULD BE A DETECTIVE STORY WRITER INSTEAD OF A BARTENDER. --THAT GHOST LEGEND WAS PERFECT...

WHAT--? WHERE'S THE **BODY**--THE AXE? THERE'S NO **BLOOD** ON THE SHEETS--!

IT- IT'S **IMPOSSIBLE!** I HEARD RALPH HACKING CATES TO PIECES! I HEARD CATES SCREAM! THE POLICE SAID HE'D BEEN **MUTILATED!** NO ONE'S BEEN HERE TO TAKE THE BODY AWAY... JOHN, I'M SCARED... I'M **VERY** SCARED...

WELL, THERE AREN'T ANY **NOW**--RALPH SAW TO **THAT!**

WELL, IT'S A CINCH I WON'T BE TENDING BAR ANYMORE--NOT AFTER YOU COLLECT CATES' INHERITANCE ANYWAY --BUT I **DIDN'T** MAKE UP THE GHOST LEGEND. PEOPLE HAVE BEEN TALKING ABOUT IT FOR **YEARS**...

AND WELL YOU **SHOULD** BE, MY DEAR SWEET WIFE! I **KNEW** YOU HAD LOVERS HIDDEN AWAY IN **OUR** HOUSE-- AND NOW I'VE CAUGHT YOU, **TOGETHER**. AND TOGETHER YOU SHALL **DIE!** MY LOVE IS VENGEANCE NOW AND IT WILL SOON BE FREE-- WITH THE REVENGE FOR YOUR INFIDELITIES...

DIE, UNFAITHFUL WIFE, DIE FOR YOURS SINS-- ALONG WITH YOUR LOVER!

NO! IT-IT CAN'T BE! YOU'RE **DEAD!** RALPH CHOPPED YOU UP! I'M **NOT** YOUR WIFE! YOU'RE **CRAZY**-- YOU CAN'T BE THE ORIGINAL CATES! I WON'T BELIEVE IT! THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS GHOSTS--!

NO! YOU'RE DEAD-- YOU'RE **DEAD!** RALPH KILLED YOU--AAAAAiiiiiiEEEEE!

GOOD LORD--!

IF YOU AXE ME, DISEMBODIED JUSTICE HAS PREVAILED HERE--BY AVENGING JEAN'S CRIME AGAINST RALPH AT THE SAME TIME AS THE DISEMBODIED CATES AVENGED HIS WIFE'S CRIME AGAINST HIM!

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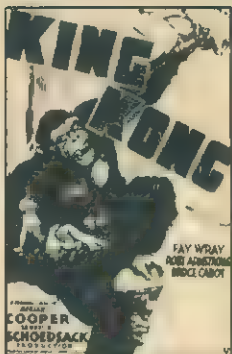
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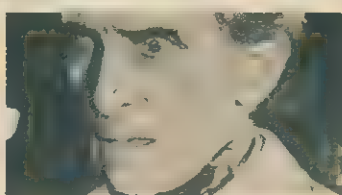
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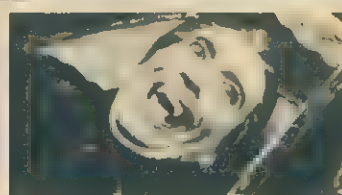
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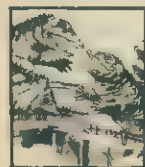
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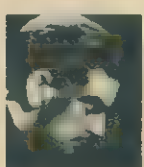
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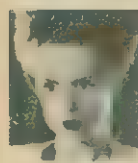
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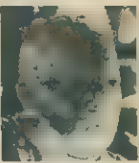
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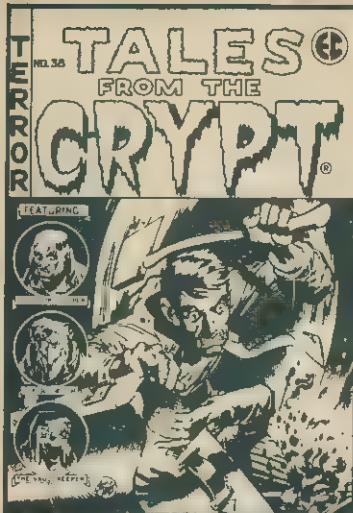
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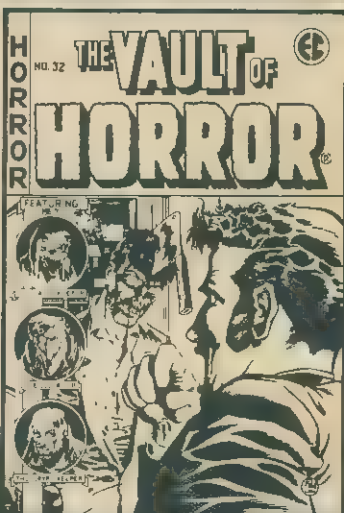
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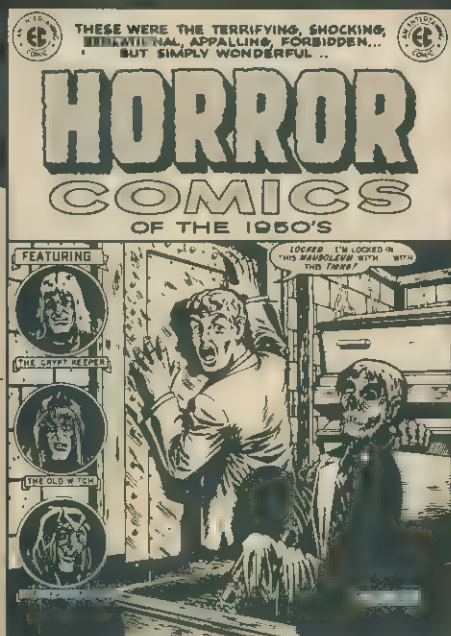
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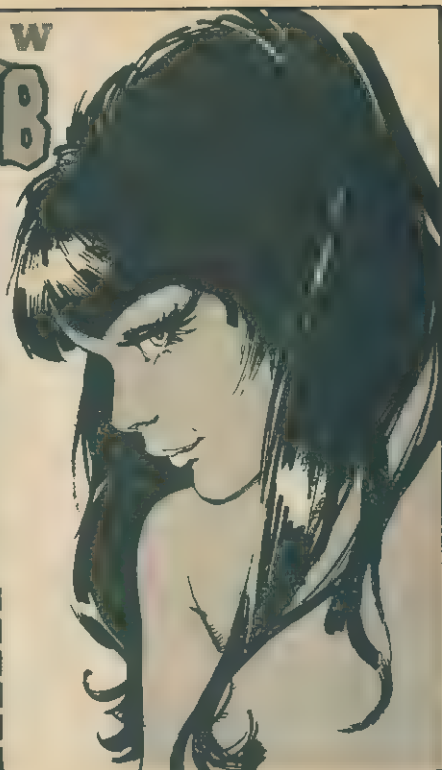
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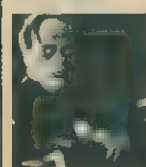
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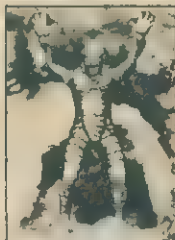
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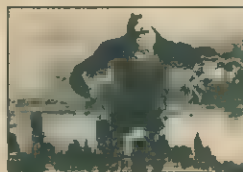
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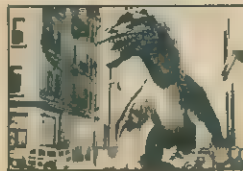
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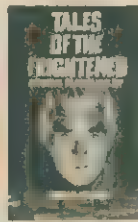
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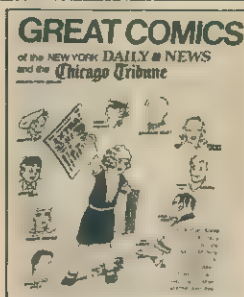
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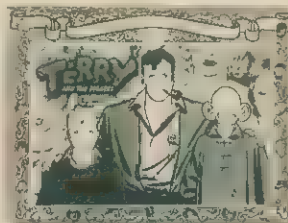
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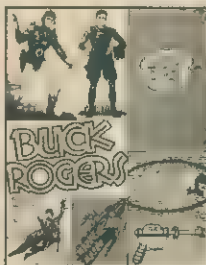
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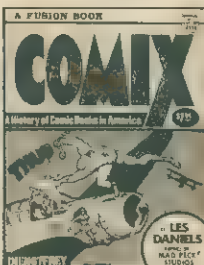
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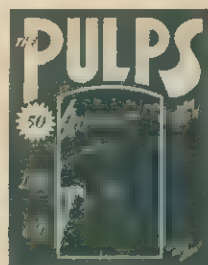
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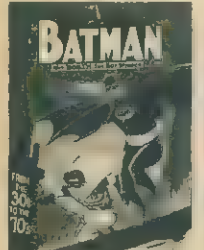
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VAMPIRE'S FLAMES

WRITER'S PROFILE: KEVIN PAGAN



Portrait of writer Kevin Pagan, whose work "Nymphs" appears on this issue's inside front cover. Garcia art.

The above sketch of me was done by my father, Frank Pagan, who is a partner and Creative Director for a major advertising agency. He originally started as a comics illustrator in the forties. Since my father is a designer and my mother a former professional singer, both periodically wonder where my writing streak came from.

I am a basically decent-looking 22 year-old who doesn't smoke, drinks moderately, has a good home life, and has a hell of a lot of trouble with women. Who

doesn't? A Moon Child with a reasonable (sometimes stubborn) disposition, I treasure my bachelorhood, freedom of opinion (in what other country are you so damn free?) and sense of humor. Women's Lib causes me no end of amusement. Not particularly a sports fan, I occasionally break down and watch the Mets. I like Italian food, English horror movies, and toasted bagels.

Since greedily absorbing volumes of Ray Bradbury, A.E. Van Vogt and Edmond Hamilton as a child, I've evolved into a fierce reader of everything from best-sellers to sci-fi paperbacks. I relax my mind by either listening to the Neil Diamond sound or scripting horror-fantasy sagas, the latter of which I've been scribbling down for longer than I can remember.

My first published work was in those amateur, privately printed, ditto-mimeo things called fanzines available only through the mail. First Pro work was 'way back in Creepy #31, ably illustrated by William Barry. I plan to be a bit more frequent after this in future issues of the Warren magazines. Of course, Editors always have the last word.

Scenes from stories written by Kevin Pagan. Below, artist William Barry's interpretation of Pagan's first professional comic work, "Laughing Liquid" from Creepy #31. At right, the chiller called "Sleep" from Creepy #44, illustrated by Mike Ploog, a terror epic.



Cerberus, the demon, leads the village children in homage to the devil in the haunting epic, "On the Ninth Day of Satan," illustrated by Felix Mas and written by Kevin Pagan from Creepy #46. Also from Pagan is the terrifying story "Warped!" which appears in the current Eerie, #41. Art by Grandenetti, the story tells of immortality.

EYE OF THE SKULL

In the darkened privacy of his room, Nicholas unwrapped the package, purchased an hour or so before at a Curiosity Shop. It was a time-bleached human skull with a sphere of pure gleaming crystal set in the right eye-socket. As he stared at the skull, turning it in his hands, watching as the light shot through the crystal, he wondered why the shop owner had been so reticent to sell the relic, why he had told all those tales of the skull's origin from the Carpathian mountains of Transylvania. The shop owner, old and balding, the very picture of a miser, warned Nicholas that the skull's previous owner had been a sorcerer who used the skull to guard his sacred grimoire. But Nicholas was determined. He was not going to be put off by a grimy shopkeeper, particularly when he was certain the legends were all a ruse to raise the price of the skull. "Whatever you do," the shopkeeper had said, leading Nicholas out the front door, "do not look into the crystal eye."

What could possibly have been so important about the eye, Nicholas wondered, amused by the foolish tries of the old shopkeeper in trying to raise the ante for the skull.

The thing was harmless enough and might well make an attractive conversation piece, if placed on the mantle where everyone could see it, see the gleaming eye as the light poured through. He looked into the clear depths of the stone. It seemed like a bottomless void drawing him deeper until his eye was against the smooth stone itself. Then, the transparency of the stone altered and it took on a rose like shade that darkened to scarlet and finally blood red in color.

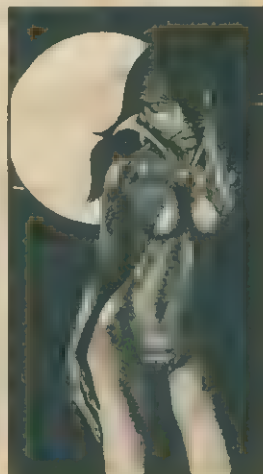
He felt teeth bite into his throat, severing the jugular vein. Nicholas was powerless to move. The room seemed to swim by its own will, as if alive. As life ebbed away, he could only stare into the ever-reddening stone set in the eye-socket of the skull. He tried with all of his might to fight the powers of the skull but there was nothing to be done, no way out. The room darkened as if through the might of the living presence within the skull, the skull that had been host to a vampire before the unknown sorcerer using stake, axe and spells bound the blood-drinking spirit within the crystal.

By Thomas Pallanta

VAMPIRE?

Everything about him said vampire! His pallor was a ghastly chalk-white and his lips and tongue looked as if they had been painted red. When he shook hands with me, I felt hair on the palm of his hand. When he smiled, I noticed a pair of gleaming, white fangs, sharp and very deadly. His long, thin hands with their long, sharp fingernails looked strangely like claws. He spoke with the classic Transylvanian accent. The sight of him sent chills up and down my spine. Then, when he began to lick his chops as if in anticipation of a meal, I hurried away, as best I could, running with everything that was in me, fear driving me on with the speed of a wolf. In the end, I suppose the moon was full that night. It is the only explanation.

By Lloyd M. Auerbach



Haunting view of our girl from Drakulon was rendered by West Haven, Conn. reader FRANK VILLANO, JR.

HIDDEN DANGER

The whine of the airship was already in his ears as he emerged from the apartment house. Living right next door to the jetport, the noise was so common that he would not have noticed it at all, had he not hated the magno-jets so much.

"Blasted suicide ships," he muttered as he gazed up at the egg-shaped craft, coming around in a tight loop before its rapid descent to the awaiting runway. As it whizzed past, he cursed the company job that had lured him to this city, forced him to live aside the jetport he loathed. Hardly had he time to complete his thought, when a terse shriek rudely announced the coming of the next magno-jet. As he watched it, he wondered whether anyone realized the danger that this time the craft might not make it.

As always, the craft executed its landing perfectly.

"Why doesn't anybody see the danger?" he asked himself. Feeling defeated, the man suddenly turned his head forward.

Suddenly, a panicky scream pierced the curtain of noise about him and even as he twirled to look, he shivered. A new magno-jet was pitching headlong into a cluster of buildings alongside the jetport and before his horrified eyes, a great ball of fire told of the incendiary devastation which had overtaken his home and the pain in his chest told him that the remote-controlled energy-source for his heart pacemaker had not survived the flaming holocaust.

By Eric W. Flesch

(Fan writer Flesch also has a letter on The Letters page.)

THE ASSASSIN

He lay in a bush tunnel atop a small knoll, overlooking the kill-area. Still, he did not move and had not for hours. Drifting in the night before, he had positioned himself before daylight. Now, at sunset, his target was due. Making a hit in twilight would be tricky, but the following nightfall would simplify his escape. Just as his camouflaged clothing defied detection in his present location, so would darkness cover his fade-out later. He raised himself cautiously to his elbows and brought the small caliber rifle to his shoulder. Where was the target? If he was late tonight, the darkness would be on his side. Steady. The first job was always the toughest; get through this initiation and he'd be on his way. Hired killers were rarely caught and the big money went to the cool kings who always succeeded. He squinted through the scope. Plenty of light left. He checked the silencer-cylinder on the bore, tight and straight. Relax. Stay loose. If not tonight, the next or even the one after that. In hunting, you stalked, waiting.

His kill-area was the back

lot of a secluded, woods-surrounded home. His intended victim always circled the house and entered from the back. But this time instead of sanctuary, death awaited. Movement from the corner of the house caught the killer's eye and he readied his aim. His target moved predictably. The first shot stopped him dead. Perfect! Dead before he hit the ground. Just to be sure, the assassin emptied the remainder of his clip into the victim's spine.

He felt a slight pang of conscience as he rode through the cool night air. It was too bad because it wasn't a bad looking dog. If it hadn't spent its time roaming the nearby neighborhoods, barking in the early dawn hours, the fed-up inhabitants would never have taken up a collection for him to rid them of the nuisance. And he wouldn't have had a chance to begin the realization of a life long dream. He was a professional killer now. He caressed the weapon hidden beneath his jacket and rode on, smiling at the cold and wintry night.

By Bill Cantey



"Sorry for the kidding cartoon, VAMPI," writes Manhattan Beach, Calif. fan artist SEAWARD TUTHILL. "You're great!"



Blonde-tressed female, dressed in VAMPIRELLA-type costuming and Levi's brand-trousers, wards off alien laser beams while carrying her true love to safety in this advertising takeoff on the comic book covers of yesteryear currently being promoted by the firm of Levi Strauss, trouser maker. Cartoonish cover ad above appeared in the trade publication, Women's Wear Daily in January.

© Levi Strauss & Co. San Francisco

DRINK, MY LOVE

I remember as if it were yesterday. You remember darling, don't you? We were really having a great time. Then you poured the wine in my glass. Softly, you whispered into my ear. "Drink, my love." It was drugged, wasn't it, Wendy?

When I awoke, sometime later, I was lying on the floor. I watched you as you threw my books on witchcraft and demonology into the fireplace. I tried to protest but it was all in vain. You laughed at me. "You believed in this stupid trash, didn't you?" I can still hear your taunts, how I was nothing better than a superstitious idiot. Then you picked up the poker from the fireplace and drove it through my chest. I blacked out in a sea of pain.

What happened after that, I really don't know. You must have bribed some doctor to make out the death certifi-

cate. Then you made the most fatal mistake. You removed the poker from my chest. The next time I opened my eyes, I was in a coffin. Now I am glad that you had the burial vault built. Otherwise, I might have been buried too deep. My hand pushed easily against the coffin lid. How easily. The sun had set and the air was most refreshing. My darling, I am home. I see that you haven't wasted time. A new boy friend, Charles. You heard a noise and called for him but when you came, you saw that he was dead, a poker through his chest.

You were frightened then. You see that trash you burned was what enabled me to return, return as I am now, a huge bat. Yes, my dear, I am a vampire. Remember when you told me to drink? Well, my thirst is being quenched.


By George Siessel

DON'T BE LEFT OUT IN THE COLD!

Why let all that great artwork, all those fantastic stories sit in a desk drawer? You might as well throw them out in the cold for all the good they're doing you! Better yet, send them to VAMPIRELLA! Address all fan art & stories to:

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HERE'S A WELL OILED EPIC WHICH WILL MAKE YOU SEE RED! IT'S AN ARTY LITTLE STORY WHICH OUGHT TO GIVE YOU A STROKE!



The "DORIAN GRAY SYNDROME"

BARBARA VASH WAS A FREELANCE WRITER WHO DEALT IN SUBJECTS OF THE OCCULT AND SUPERNATURAL. ONLY A SURE SELLING STORY COULD LURE HER INTO THE LOWER HAUNTS... PLACES FREQUENTED BY SUCH UNDESIRABLE CHARACTERS AS GORDON HATFIELD...




THERE HE IS, SITTING AT THAT TABLE. GORDON HATFIELD! FROM THE LOOKS OF HIM YOU'D NEVER BELIEVE THE INCREDIBLE STORIES GOING AROUND... THAT HE'S ALMOST A HUNDRED YEARS OLD!



WELL, I'M NOT GETTING ANY INFO BY STANDING AROUND!

EXCUSE ME, MR. HATFIELD. MY NAME IS BARBARA VASH... AND I'D LIKE TO TALK TO YOU FOR A FEW MINUTES, IF IT'S OKAY?

YOU'RE A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN, MISS VASH. AND UNDER ORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES I'D BE GLAD TO INVITE YOU TO MY TABLE... HOWEVER NOT TONIGHT.



YOU SEE... I'M IN MOURNING. THE GIRL I LOVED WAS RECENTLY DISCOVERED DEAD... BY HER OWN HAND.

NOW IF YOU'LL LEAVE ME WITH MY THOUGHTS...

SHE FELT UNEASY ABOUT HATFIELD'S COLDNESS, EVEN THE NEXT MORNING WHEN SHE ATTENDED THE DEAD GIRL'S FUNERAL.



THAT'S STRANGE. HATFIELD'S NOWHERE ABOUT. IF HE REALLY LOVED HER HE WOULD HAVE ATTENDED HER FUNERAL.

SHE HAD COME FOR A STORY. AFTER ALL SHE WAS A FREELANCE WRITER. SO SHE LISTENED...

I TELL YOU SHE'S LIKE ALL THE OTHERS. SHE MIGHT'VE TAKEN HER OWN LIFE... BUT IT WAS 'CAUSE OF HIM! GORDON HATFIELD!

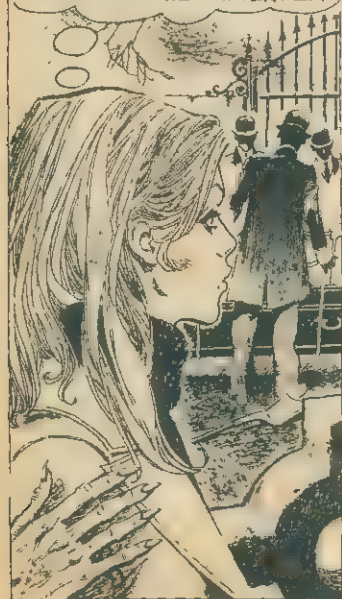


YOU'RE RIGHT! THERE'S SOMETHING WEIRD ABOUT HATFIELD! HE'S STRANGE!

WHEN I WAS A YOUNGSTER THAT HATFIELD LOOKED THE SAME AGE AS HE DOES NOW! I'VE HEARD RUMORS THAT HE HAS A PAINTING...IT'S HIS PORTRAIT! THEY SAY IT AGES FOR HIM SO HE CAN STAY ETERNALLY YOUNG, IT'S UGLY AND RIDDLED WITH SIN! I EVEN HEARD HE SOLD HIS SOUL TO THE DEVIL FOR IT!



AGAIN...THE SAME STORIES ABOUT HATFIELD, JUST LIKE OSCAR WILDE'S STORY "THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY" I'VE ENCOUNTERED MANY INEXPLICABLE THINGS IN RESEARCHING ARTICLES. MAYBE THIS PAINTING THING ISN'T SO FAR FETCHED AFTER ALL.



HUH!? OH, YOU STARTLED ME!



I'M SORRY FOR THAT, MY DEAR! BUT YOU SEE, I KNOW THAT YOU'VE BEEN TRYING TO FIND OUT ABOUT GORDON HATFIELD. IF YOU PROMISE TO DO AS I ASK... THEN I'LL TELL YOU EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW!

WHAT HAVE I GOT TO LOSE?

ALL RIGHT! I'LL DO WHATEVER YOU ASK, PROVIDED YOU GIVE ME THE STORY I'M AFTER!



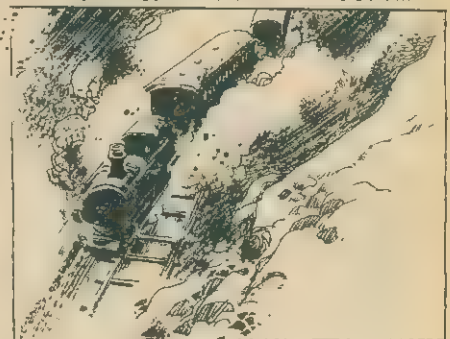
ALL RIGHT! THEN LISTEN...FOR I'VE SURVIVED THIS LONG... ONLY TO TELL MY STORY TO THE RIGHT PERSON! I MUST TALK FAST!



"HARRRHHH! MR. HATFIELD, HAVE I GOT A GOOD ONE FER YA!"

"AN' ME, I GOTCHA' THAT STUFF YE BEEN WANTIN'!"

"THEY SAY THAT GORDON HATFIELD OFFERED HIS SOUL TO SATAN IN RETURN FOR PERPETUAL YOUTH. APPARENTLY THE PRINCE OF DARKNESS ANSWERED HIS PRAYER, FOR HE WAS THE ONLY SURVIVOR OF A TERRIBLE RAILROAD ACCIDENT..."



"GORDON HATFIELD HAS ALWAYS BEEN PROUD OF HIS HANDSOME FEATURES. ALL THAT HAS EVER CONCERNED HIM IS EARTHLY PLEASURE. HE EXISTS ONLY TO SATISFY HIS VARIOUS LUSTS, FREQUENTING THE WORST PLACES IN TOWN AND ASSOCIATING WITH SCOUNDRELS OF EVERY TYPE"

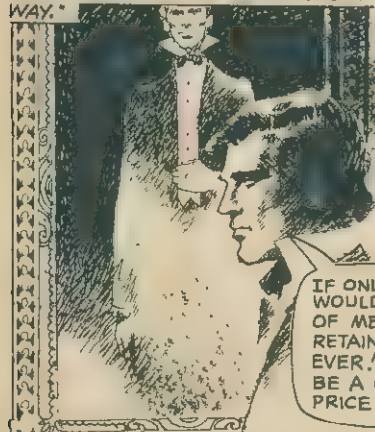


"YOU FILTH WILL BE WELL PAID... AS USUAL..."

"THERE IS A PAINTING OF HATFIELD HANGING IN AN UPSTAIRS ROOM OF HIS MANSION. GORDON HAS ALWAYS BEEN PROUD OF THAT PAINTING. IT IS LIKE HIM IN EVERY WAY."

"AND SO IT ALL BEGAN! ALL THOSE WHO EVER LOVED HIM... OR HAD ANY DEALINGS WITH HIM... LEARNED TRAGEDY!"

"THERE WAS NO ESTIMATING HIS DEBAUCHERY AND CRIME. ALTHOUGH THE LAW WAS UNABLE TO PROVE ANYTHING AGAINST HIM, THE PAINTING REFLECTED THE TRUE EVIL OF HATFIELD... YEARS LATER, HE STILL APPEARED TO BE A YOUNG AND INNOCENT MAN."



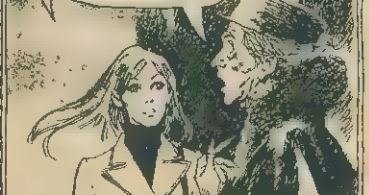
"IF ONLY THE PAINTING WOULD AGE INSTEAD OF ME! I COULD RETAIN MY YOUTH FOREVER! MY SOUL WOULD BE A CHEAP ENOUGH PRICE TO PAY!"



"I TOLD YOU THAT YOU NO LONGER AMUSE ME, MY DEAR. IF YOU PREFER TO KILL YOURSELF, THEN GO AHEAD. I DON'T CARE."

"THAT STORY IS UTTERLY INCREDIBLE! BUT... ASSUMING THAT IT'S TRUE, HOW DO YOU KNOW SO MUCH ABOUT HATFIELD?"

"I'VE KNOWN HIM FOR A LONG TIME. IT WAS NEVER MADE PUBLIC, I'M... HIS DAUGHTER!"



"MY MOTHER WAS ONE OF THOSE WHO DIED BECAUSE OF HIM! AND NOW... YOUR PROMISE..."



"TAKE THIS KEY... TO HIS HOUSE... DESTROY THE PICTURE... AVENGE ME... AVENGE MY MOTHER... AND ALL THE OTHERS!"



"DEAD! THE STRAIN WAS TOO MUCH FOR HER! AND NOW I ALONE HOLD THE KEY..."

BARBARA KNEW SHE WAS COMMITTING AN ILLEGAL ACT. STILL, THE THOUGHT THAT A REAL LIFE "DORIAN GRAY" EXISTED, DROVE HER ON.

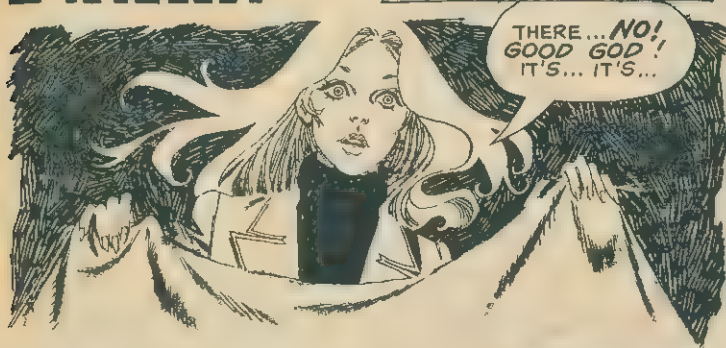
THOSE STAIRS...THE OLD WOMAN SAID THE PAINTING WAS KEPT UPSTAIRS. WELL, HERE GOES!

SHE MOVED SILENTLY THERE WERE NO SERVANTS AND HATFIELD WAS NOWHERE ABOUT.

THIS MUST BE THE ROOM! I THOUGHT I KNEW ALL ABOUT THE OCCULT...BUT IF THIS IS REALLY TRUE...

HER HEART WAS READY TO BURST. SHE ENTERED THE FORBIDDING ROOM, RECALLING THE DREAD PROMISE SHE MADE TO THE OLD WOMAN...

A PAINTING! I'LL TAKE AWAY THE CLOTH... MAYBE, THIS IS THE PAINTING... OH, GOD!

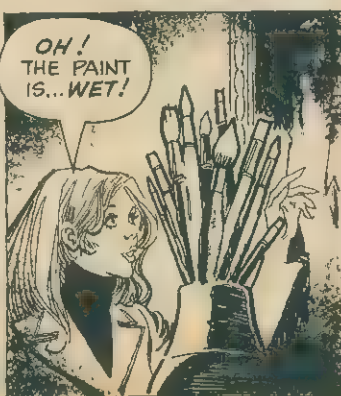


THERE...NO! GOOD GOD! IT'S... IT'S...

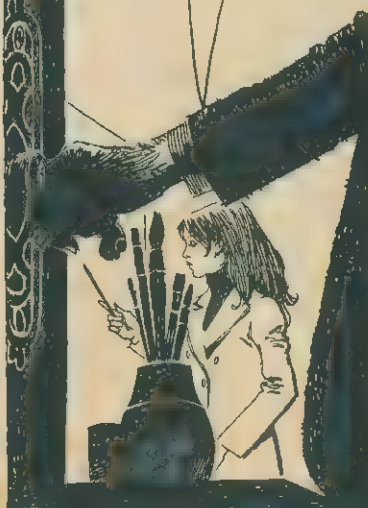
...FRESH PAINTS...AND WET BRUSHES! WHAT'S GOING ON HERE? WHY WOULD A SUPERNATURAL AGENCY LIKE THE DEVIL NEED PAINTS AND BRUSHES TO DISTORT THE PICTURE?

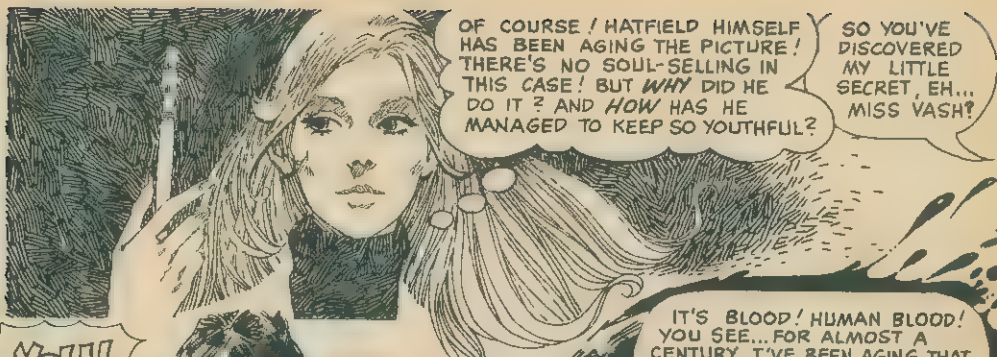


THE MOST GHASTLY THING I'VE EVER SEEN! IT'S HORRIBLE!



OH! THE PAINT IS...WET!





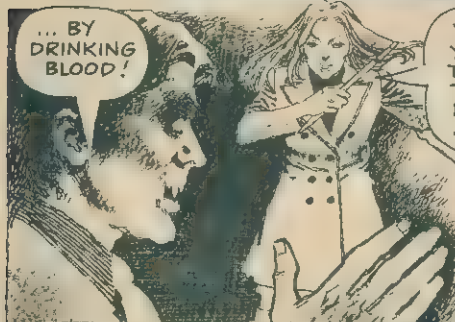
OF COURSE! HATFIELD HIMSELF HAS BEEN AGING THE PICTURE! THERE'S NO SOUL-SELLING IN THIS CASE! BUT WHY DID HE DO IT? AND HOW HAS HE MANAGED TO KEEP SO YOUTHFUL?

SO YOU'VE DISCOVERED MY LITTLE SECRET, EH... MISS VASH?

You!

YES, MISS VASH! YOUR CHEAP LITTLE KNOWLEDGE OF THE OCCULT MUST TELL YOU THAT THIS ISN'T PAINT SMEARED ON MY MOUTH!

IT'S BLOOD! HUMAN BLOOD! YOU SEE... FOR ALMOST A CENTURY I'VE BEEN AGING THAT PICTURE WITH MY OWN ARTISTIC HAND! AGING IT SO THAT PEOPLE WOULD SUSPECT I'D SOLD MY SOUL! AND SO THEY WOULDN'T SUSPECT HOW I KEPT MY YOUTH...



... BY DRINKING BLOOD!

YOU'RE A VAMPIRE! YOU... **DIED** IN THAT TRAIN WRECK LIKE ALL THE OTHERS! AND CAME BACK FROM THE DEAD ...**UNDEAD** ETERNALLY!

GO AHEAD! IT'S JUST A PAINTING! THERE IS NO BOND THERE LIKE IN YOUR "DORIAN GRAY" STORY!

THAT IS WHY I DIDN'T ATTEND MY "LOVE'S" FUNERAL, IF EVEN JUST FOR APPEARANCES' SAKE, AFTER DRINKING HER BLOOD, I KILLED HER... LIKE ALL THE OTHERS. AND NOW YOU'VE DISCOVERED THE TRUTH...

MY DEAR, I'D HAVE YOU BEFORE YOU COULD HIT YOUR TARGET!



STAY BACK... OR I'LL SHOVE THIS INTO YOUR HEART!



MAYBE... BUT I CAN STAB THE PAINTING!



HIS VOICE, A SOMBER CHILL IN THE DARKENED ROOM...



WE SHALL
SEE!

IT WAS A DESPERATE
ACT, YET BARBARA VASH
WAS AN OCCULT AUTHOR-
ITY. PERHAPS SHE KNEW
SOMETHING THAT HATFIELD
DID NOT.



ARGHHHHH!

WHA...? MY HEART!
IT FEELS LIKE IT'S
BEEN... IMPALED!
CAN'T STAND
THE... PAIN...
UGHHHH...!

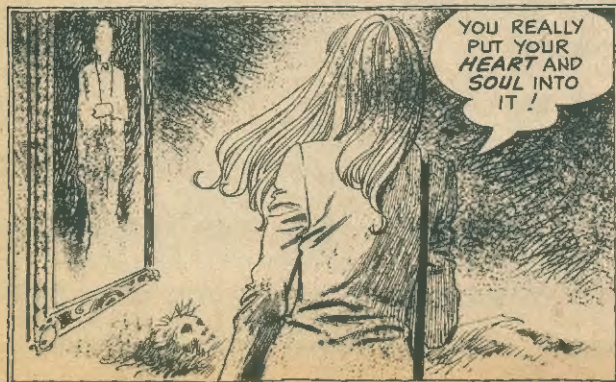


NO, YOU NEVER MADE A PACT WITH
SATAN! YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO! YOUR
OWN ENTHUSIASM FINALLY
DESTROYED YOU!



I KNOW ENOUGH ABOUT VODOO!
DOLLS CONTAINING PIECES OF FLESH
OR HAIR FROM THEIR HUMAN
COUNTERPARTS CAN CAUSE PAIN,
EVEN DEATH TO THEIR VICTIMS...
IF STABBED WITH PINS OR
OTHERWISE DESTROYED!

PHYSICALLY THERE WAS
NOTHING OF YOU IN THAT
PAINTING, GORDON HATFIELD!
PIECES OF FLESH AND HAIR
WEREN'T NECESSARY! YOU
PAINTED YOUR
MASTERPIECE
TOO WELL!



YOU REALLY
PUT YOUR
HEART AND
SOUL INTO
IT!

WELL, IT WAS
CURTAINS FOR OLD
DORIAN, ALL RIGHT!
AND HE WAS SUCH
A PICTURE OF
HEALTH! WELL, IF
YOU FIND THIS
TALE TOO COLOR
FUL TO PALLETE,
BRUSH OFF!





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If you have a son 10 years old, you'd better start worrying.

It sounds absurd, doesn't it? That your son will have to go to Vietnam 8 years from now.

It may sound absurd, but this is an absurd kind of war. And it's perfectly possible you will see your own son sent off to it.

It's perfectly possible because this is a war that's been going on for the past 30 years. Yes, the past 30 years. That's how long there's been fighting and killing in Vietnam. So it isn't so absurd to think this war can go on for another 8 years, is it?

It's perfectly possible, because in spite of all the speeches and all the promises, the President has yet to set a definite date for withdrawal. Yes, that's true. The President hasn't named a day nor a month nor even a year as a time for getting out.

In fact, the President talks about leaving "residual" forces and "maintenance" troops in or around Vietnam. (If you remember, what got us into this mess was the sending of "advisory personnel" to Vietnam.)

Now do you see why it's perfectly possible that your son will fight in this absurd war? A war where mass murders of women and children are called "no big deal." A war that has already killed over 50,000 American boys who were 10 years old themselves not so long ago.

One of the most effective things you can do for your son is write your Congressmen today. They *must* know they have your support to act in Congress against this absurd war.

Write them now. And maybe 10 years from now your son will be glad you did.

Help Unsell The War
Box 903
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New York, N.Y. 10022

Help Unsell The War: A project of Clergy and Laymen Concerned, 637 W. 125th Street, New York, N.Y. 10027